

Keeping the Americans in

The Impact of Afghanistan on Transatlantic Relations within NATO

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Abstract

The fundamental inquiry that motivates this thesis is: to illuminate in what way, and to what extent, NATO's operations in Afghanistan have affected the Alliance. More specifically, how NATO has adapted to American initiatives of transformation in light of the war in Afghanistan, and the American paradigm of War on Terror. Transatlantic relations within NATO is my subject, and Afghanistan is my chosen case. The question I strive to answer is whether Afghanistan specifically, and the War on Terror in general, has wielded a dividing or unifying effect upon the Alliance. I do so by studying the *political*, *organizational* and *military* impact of its Afghan engagement on NATO. I analyze changes within the alliance in regard to these three dimensions, and the Alliance's process of transformation between 2001 and 2010. All in reference to the War on Terror as the US's ruling security paradigm and NATO's involvement in Afghanistan.

In conclude that: the impact of Afghanistan, in the context of the War on Terror, has moved from initially creating a high degree of political unity and exposing organizational and military division. To increased military interoperability and comprehensive, albeit flawed, organizational adaptation to American initiatives, and thus a lessening of the division in regard to these two dimensions, while the political unity since 2006 has suffered greatly, mainly due to inadequate burden-sharing in Afghanistan.

The theories of realism and liberal institutionalism were employed to theoretically illuminate the analysis. As a whole, in this case, realism wielded the highest degree of explanatory power of the two.

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Abbreviations

9/11	The Terrorist Attacks of September 11th 2001
ACO	Allied Command Operations
ACT	Allied Command Transformation
ANA	Afghanistan National Army
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
CENTCOM	Central Command
CIMIC	Civilian Military Cooperation
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
DefBN	Defence Battalion
DCI	Defence Capabilities Initiative
DoD	Department of Defence
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
FOC	Full Operational Capability
HQ	Head Quarters
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF	International Security and Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NMS	National Military Strategy
NRF	NATO Response Force
NSS	National Security Strategy
OAE	Operation Active Endeavour
OAF	Operation Allied Force
ODF	Operation Deliberate Force
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PCC	Prague Capabilities Commitments
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RC-S	Regional Command South
ROE	Rules of Engagement
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SACT	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
SOF	Special Operation Forces
UK	The United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
WWII	World War Two

1 Introduction

As the heads of state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members met to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary in 2009, the alliance, that was originally created to deter or fight a conventional war on European soil, found itself embroiled in the seventh year of unconventional combat in distant Afghanistan. The UN mandated, NATO commanded International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is the Alliance's largest operation to date, and is together with the Afghan National Army (ANA) responsible for the security of the entire vast and mountainous country. Over the last few years death tolls have risen sharply making 2009 the deadliest year since the invasion and this bloodstained trend continues in 2010. There is no doubt the Afghan experience will leave its mark on the Alliance. Some even go as far as questioning whether failure might ultimately hold the potential of making Afghanistan the burial ground of the transatlantic Alliance (e.g. Rupp 2006; Kay & Khan 2007; Menon 2008; Noetzel & Schreer 2009 and Ibrahim 2009). The question under scrutiny for this thesis is the nature and extent of this mark, and its consequences for the transatlantic dynamic of NATO.

America's relationship with, and attitude towards, NATO has been a subject of concern throughout the history of the alliance. The original main challenges and purposes of the NATO alliance were quite poetically, however somewhat bluntly, summed up in the undying words of its first Secretary General the British Lord Ismay: *"To keep the Russians out, the Germans down, and the Americans in"*. Of the three only the latter still remains as relevant to this day. Although the challenges to NATO may have been reduced in number, the one remaining challenge is widely considered, to put it dramatically, to be a matter of life and death for the relevance of the ageing Alliance in today's game of international politics. If one looks to the purely military side of the matter the US with its overwhelming military power always has been, and in the foreseeable future remains, a *sine qua non* for a militarily strong and relevant NATO. Some argue, however, there is much more to NATO than the purely military.

The proponents of this line of thought speak of the alliance as a transatlantic security community (e.g. Hallams 2009, Hallams 2010).

Today, as it has been before, Afghanistan is the centre of attention for the great powers of the world. The quickest glance at history will reveal that this is not the first time this tribal country is at the international centre stage. Afghanistan lived through the toil and torment of being a pawn in the Great Game of Central Asia played out by the British and the Russian in the 19th century. Pinned between the mighty Russian bear in the north and the vast British Empire to the south – Afghanistan – is where they clashed. Twice invaded by the British, first in 1839 then again in 1878, and repeatedly menaced by several border disputes wherein Russia seized northern Afghan territory. Afghanistan's borders to the south and north are to this day a product of the Great Game, and run dividing lines through tribal communities. Despite their efforts and extensive sacrifices neither the British nor the Russians ever gained complete control over the rugged terrain of Afghanistan and its ferociously independent people. (See: Hammes 2006:Chap.11)

Taking a leap forward in time Afghanistan once again found itself in the thick of international power politics as the Soviet tanks rolled over its northern border in December 1979. In the context of the all encompassing Cold War, Afghanistan once again served as the arena for the battle of the titans. The great powers of the world may have changed, this time around it was the Soviet Union and the US that fought it out, but the venue stayed the same – Afghanistan. The conflict between the Red Army and the American backed Mujahedin Islamic fighters was to go on for nine years before the Soviet Union backed out after failing to stabilize the country. Chaos and Civil War was to follow. After years of strife the Taliban movement rose to power in 1996 bringing stability to Afghanistan at the price of a, by any internationally recognized human rights standard, horrifically oppressive regime. The world did not pay much heed. That is, until the happenings of September 11th 2001 were to change the world of international politics and the future of Afghanistan forever. The bitter irony of course being that the US and NATO today are facing many of their old bedfellows

from the insurgent war on the Soviet Union, in which they backed the Islamic Mujahedin. (See: Barth 2008)

Deserved or not, the Afghanistan that the US and later NATO has entered as part of the War on Terror has gained quite a reputation as the burial ground of great powers. Time and time again it has proven resilient to foreign influence and even invasion (Hammes 2006:Chap.11). NATO's presence in Afghanistan is, as these words are written, beginning on its eight year. Sharp tongued, however humorously inclined, critics may say that NATO seems to have taken on the Olympic spirit in Afghanistan: the important thing is not to win, but to participate.

Claims of, and debates surrounding, the theme of disproportionate sharing of the human and economical burden placed upon the members of the Alliance is nothing new. On the contrary it is a reoccurring theme throughout the time of the transatlantic Alliance (e.g. Rupp 2006; Sperling and Webber 2009; Hallams 2010; Ringsmose 2010). With the war in Afghanistan evolving into its current shape of counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, which are immensely costly both in terms of time, money and human lives, the issue has received new vigor. US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates spoke on the issue in remarkably candid words before a US congressional committee in 2008 when he told them that he feared the development of *“a two-tiered alliance in which you have some allies willing to fight and die to protect people's security and others who are not”* (Reuters US 2008). As I shall proceed to illustrate, one may trace the echo of Secretary Gates' words into the recent academic writings on the Alliance as well. Much has been written and said since the Cold War ended on what Waltz (2000:18) has called *“the strange case of NATO”* which seems to never die. Some may claim NATO is on its death bed – the debate, however, could hardly be more alive.

Compared to the times of the Cold War the nineties showed us a remarkably different NATO than had been before the fall of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. As the sudden changes of the early nineties ushered in a new era of world politics, so did the 9/11 attacks which brought us the “War on Terror”. The US National Security Strategy

(NSS) of 2002 states that “*The United States of America is fighting a war against terrorists of global reach. The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism— premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents*” (NSS 2002). As is debated in the theory section (Chapter 2) of this thesis, the origins and drivers of major change in international organizations is a controversial topic. What is blatant for everyone to observe, however, is that change does occur. We must thus ask ourselves; how and why has the American paradigm of War on Terror changed NATO compared to the times before 2001 and the Afghan War? As Dale (2006:1) writes: “*Afghanistan has ... become a test of NATO's ability to transform itself and adapt to the post-9/11 threat environment.*”

1.1 Literary Review and Research Question

There exists a trend in the recent literature written on NATO and transatlantic security relations towards painting NATO's mission in Afghanistan as a case of *do or die* for the ageing alliance. The future of NATO as a relevant actor in matters of international security is deemed to be highly dependent on the fate of the ISAF mission. Examples of this quite prominent line of thought are: *Rupp* (2006), *Kay & Khan* (2007), *Menon* (2008), *Noetzel & Schreer* (2009) and *Ibrahim* (2009). The arguments here are that NATO, as demonstrated by its highly marginal role in Afghanistan from 2001-2003, has failed to find (be given) a purpose in the post-9/11 world and the new ruling paradigm of US security policy that is the War on Terror – and therefore is living on borrowed time. In an essay with the telling title *R.I.P. NATO* published in *The American Interest* in 2008 Menon writes:

NATO's problem is that its purpose is no longer clear, even to its own members. In several key NATO states, few people know what the alliance does, let alone how it serves their interests. And who can blame them? Just try to define the present purpose of NATO as a military alliance in a sentence, even a long sentence. It's not easy as it once was...

Although NATO since 2003 has been given an increasingly central role in Afghanistan, the Alliance has, so far, failed to achieve its mission objective that is to stabilize the country. This, is argued, will be the end of the Alliance as the US in the future will turn elsewhere in times of trouble. Afghanistan is painted up to be a litmus test for the alliance. A test that can only hold two possible outcomes – success or failure – and failure is something that NATO can not afford to overcome. Afghanistan is deemed to have profoundly divided the allies. Noetzel and Schreer (2009:544) write:

The political wounds from the ISAF mission will ...haunt the Atlantic alliance and will put brakes on its military engagements. Thus failure in Afghanistan would put strong limitations on the alliance's future scope and role as an international security actor.

Even more plainly spoken is Rupp (2006:155) when he argues that “*Failure in Afghanistan would be devastating for NATO*”. This line of thought is by no means exclusive to the academic sphere. US Army Colonel Booth (2008:2) proposes that “*NATO's success or failure in Afghanistan has critical implications for its transformation into a relevant, capable, and willing alliance in the 21th century.*”

On the other hand, however, there are scholars like Hallams (2010), Sperling & Webber (2009) and Thies (2009) who interpret Afghanistan and ISAF to be yet another in a long line of cases that have (wrongfully) been foretold to be the swan song of the Alliance; from the Suez crisis in the 1950s, the French withdrawal from the Command Structure in 1966, through the troubled times of losing its nemesis with the demise of the Soviet Union, to the Balkan operations in the 1990s and lastly the *thanks, but no thanks* response of the Bush administration to the Alliance offering its solidarity on the 12th of September 2001.

The advocates of this position point to that NATO's shared values and institutions makes the Alliance suited to adapt to changes in circumstances. They underline that NATO's entire development has taken the form of adaptations to external crisis such as those mentioned above, and not premeditated strategic choices. They further argue that NATO has not only adapted, it has done so remarkably well. NATO has endured

many a major crisis, and although Afghanistan and ISAF surely will effect and leave its mark on the alliance, the operation does not in their view hold the potential seeds of NATO's demise. Sperling and Webber (2009:491) write:

NATO has faced imminent collapse so often that it is difficult to take seriously the latest judgement that its days are numbered. ...NATO seems to possess an inexhaustible capacity for recovery, a characteristic NATO pessimists largely ignore.

Thies (2009:1) writes on the many eulogies written for NATO over the years:

Looking back over the history of the Alliance, there seems to have been scarcely a year when it [NATO] was not widely said to be in crisis, or at least in disarray.

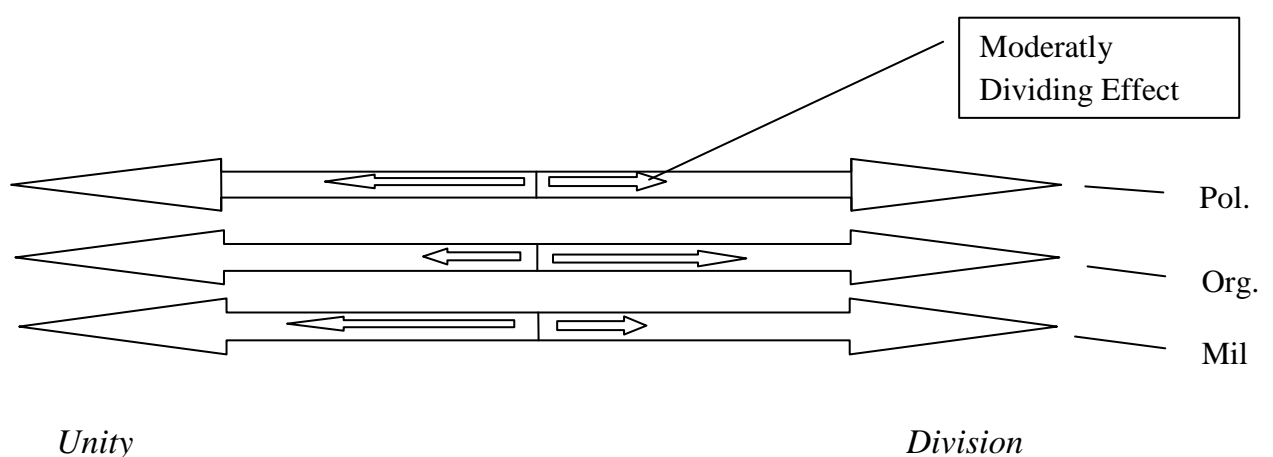
Examining the literature a central, and highly contested, question that thus warrants further scholarly investigation is: To what extent does NATO's engagement in Afghanistan *actually* represent a litmus test for the development of the US-NATO relationship, and thus the future of NATO as a relevant security policy actor? This, however, is a question that can not be fully answered at the present time, as the operations are still ongoing and the ramifications of the Afghan engagement may not be revealed for years to come after any future withdrawal. Many, for instance, hold that the ultimate ramifications of NATO's Operation Allied Force (OAF) in Kosovo in 1999 did not become apparent until the US left NATO on the sidelines in its War on Terror in October 2001 (e.g. Hallams 2010:61, Rupp 2006:70). To circumvent the issues of proposing to foretell the future the question of Afghanistan's *ultimate* impact on NATO will have to wait for future scholarly endeavors. The years that have passed since the US, and later NATO, entered the theatre of Afghanistan, and up to 2010 should, however, provide substantial ground for analysis of the engagement's impact upon the Alliance thus far.

As this short review reveals, much has been written on the subject of NATO and Afghanistan. It can be argued, however, that to a very little extent the existing

literature differentiates between the various aspects – separate dimensions – of the Alliance. I propose and hypothesize that the Afghan engagement very possibly has wielded a different effect on the military or organizational dimension of NATO matters, than the political. A monolithic analytical concept of NATO does not leave room for this differentiation and is thus prone to simplification in assessing the impact of Afghanistan on the Alliance. Afghanistan and ISAF may, for instance, have been a politically dividing experience for the alliance, while at the same time providing for tighter military cooperation through the seven years of fighting together in Afghanistan. An analytical concept that takes such differences into consideration will provide for a more nuanced analysis and therefore a potentially higher degree of validity.

In analyzing the Afghan War's impact upon transatlantic relations within NATO I have utilized two main analytical concepts: *unity* and *division*. *Unity* and *Division* are for the purpose of this thesis to be understood as opposite extremes of a broad spectrum. In my analysis (and elsewhere) I use the non-static terms *unifying* and *dividing* as to illustrate in which way the analysis indicates the phenomenon in question to be moving the Alliance along the spectrum.

Table 1: Three Dimensions of Unity and Division



By studying the *political*, *organizational* and *military* impact of the Afghan engagement on NATO, this thesis will contribute to the above outlined discussion on the present and future development of the transatlantic security relations. The

originality of the thesis lies within the structuring of the empirical findings in the manner of these three dimensions which I proceed to define in Chapter 3. Within each sub-section I also operationalize what is meant by the two key terms of *unity* and *division* in relevance to the specific dimension.

The overarching research question I ask is thus:

To what extent has NATO's Afghan engagement, so far, served to be a source of greater transatlantic unity, or a source of division, within the Alliance?

Throughout the analysis the research question is treated in its grander context of the paradigm of War on Terror.

In order to answer my research question I begin by discussing the theoretical framework of the thesis in Chapter 2. Then I in Chapter 3 proceed to detail the methodology applied. Chapter 4 is divided into four sub-chapters, one for each time period of the analysis, all of which are concluded by an assessment of the three dimensions of unity and division. Finally in Chapter 5 I present the key empirical outcomes and theoretical implications.

2 Theoretical Framework

The task at hand for this thesis is analyzing the impact of the Afghanistan engagement on the transatlantic dynamic of the Alliance, and assessing the implications of that impact. What I shall aspire to unveil in my empirical investigation are signs of whether Afghanistan has been a generator of greater unity and alliance cohesion across the Atlantic, or if the Afghan experience has been a force driving the US and the other allies apart. All in reference to the political, the organizational and the military dimensions of the Alliance. It can be argued that the two meta-theories of Realism and Liberalism can make better sense of, categorize as well as contextualize and explain my findings.

The present academic debate on NATO is to a large extent analogue to, and fits in to the greater picture of, the debate between realist and liberal institutionalists over the future of NATO that emerged with the end of the Cold War¹. Realist theory deems alliances to in their very nature be inheritably temporary as they are a product of external circumstances. Once the external threat disappear – so does the glue sustaining and creating alliance cohesion and effectively holding the allies together. The development from the US and Soviet Union's great alliance against Hitler into their belligerency during the Cold War is the quintessential empirical example of this realist brand of alliance theory. The prominent realist scholar Kenneth Waltz proclaimed before the US Senate as early as 1990 that “*NATO is a disappearing thing*” (Quoted in Hallams 2009:39). With the benefit of hindsight it is however clear that the end of NATO would in fact not follow from the end of the Cold War. There exists both a realist and a liberalist way to interpret and explain this development.

In terms of realism NATO has persevered because it, despite the fall of its nemesis and initial reason for being as we entered the nineties, was deemed by its member states to still serve their national interests. As the international structure that shapes the national

¹ For some important contributions in this debate see: Mearsheimer (1990); Waltz (1993), (1997) and (2000); Wholforth (1995); Keohane & Martin (1995); McCalla (1996a); McCalla (1996b); Haftendorn, Keohane & Wallander (1999); Keohane (2002)

interests of the world's sovereign states evolved after the end of the Cold War – so did NATO by moving out of area. Waltz again wrote on the subject, ten years the wiser, in 2000 (p. 18) following NATO's two wars in the Balkans: *“Far from invalidating realist theory or casting doubt on it, however, the recent history of NATO illustrates the subordination of international institutions to national purposes.”*

Realism argues that states are the only actors of importance. States are unitary, rational and amoral actors in pursuit of fulfillment of their national interests, and their primary motivating force is the international structure – which is anarchy. Being that states find themselves to be in a realm of anarchy they are preoccupied with power and security, and are predisposed towards conflict. As gains won or loss alters the power balance between states, the fear of war leads them to perceive gains in relative terms. Cooperation through international organizations that might very well be beneficial to the state in absolute terms in an isolated context is, despite this, not engaged in on the basis of fears of even greater gains awarded to other states. International law and institutions are therefore little but formalizations of already existing state behavior and unspoken practices that have been hammered out in the Darwinist world of anarchy and power long before they reach the assemblies of the UN. These basic propositions of realism add up to a negative prospect towards the degree of potential influence wielded by international organizations, like NATO. As realist J. M. Grieco (1988:488) writes: *“...international institutions affect cooperation [between states] only marginally”*. The realist position towards international organizations is therefore quite adequately contained within the metaphorical picture of international organizations as *arenas* for the advancement of the national interest of the states that fund and sustain them.

Liberal institutionalists however suggests that the reasons for NATO's perseverance are to find largely within the organization itself. As the O in the Alliance's famous acronym reveals NATO is no mere traditional alliance in line with the above mentioned WWII example. On the contrary NATO is an international organization with its own Secretary General to go along with its very own bureaucracy and institutional framework. Furthermore the proponents of the liberalist line of thought

speaking much more frequently of NATO as a *security community*² than an old fashioned alliance. The emphasis is placed on democracy and shared values. As opposed to realism's amoral interest driven state actors, liberal institutionalism views the state as an actor significantly moderated by normative beliefs, values and ideas.

...when the alliance experiences periods of tension and crisis, the shared values that bind member states together prove sufficiently strong to weather the storm. ...there still exists within the alliance a strong spirit of "transatlantic community"; while this may have been tested in recent years it remains central to understanding how NATO has managed not only to survive beyond the end of the Cold War, but reinvent itself in a changing strategic landscape

(Hallams 2010:9)

A very high degree of explanatory power is attributed to shared values in assessing NATO's perseverance Hallams (2010:16) claims that "*It was the sense of Atlantic community that helped NATO survive the tensions of the Cold War years*". She goes on to state that "*...the shared values and ideals that bound the alliance together proved stronger than the disputes that threatened to tear the alliance apart*" (Hallams 2010:17).

Even though liberal institutionalism, like realism, recognizes that states operate in an environment of anarchy, the behavioral expectations drawn from this assumption differ greatly. International regimes and international institutions are together with states the main units of analysis. One of the leading scholars within the school of liberal institutionalism namely R. Keohane defines regimes as "*persistent and connected sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations*" (Keohane 1989:2). In opposition to realism, liberal institutionalism regards regimes and international institutions as able to constrain and impact on state behavior. As Hallams (2010:4) points out: "*Leading institutionalists such as Keohane (2002), Robert B. McCalla (1996a) and G. John*

² This term is also closely associated with the theory of constructivism (e.g. Williams & Neumann 2000). In this thesis however I shall keep to the liberal institutionalist concept of *security community*.

Ikenberry (2001) have all focused on the institutional adaptation of NATO as the key to its survival". NATO's institutional adaptations to the American paradigm of War on Terror is, in reference to this, part of the analysis conducted in this thesis. Implications of the failures and successes of that adaptation, in light of the theoretical framework, are discussed in the final concluding Chapter.

The stance, identified in the literature and outlined in Chapter 1, that anything but success for NATO in Afghanistan would effectively mean the beginning of the end for the Alliance, is rooted in the theory of realism. This becomes apparent if one scrutinizes the implicit theoretical underpinnings of the argument. The argument is highly state centered and presupposes that it is the national interests of the Alliances' by far most powerful member – the US – that in the end determines the future relevance of NATO as a key player on the international security arena. And if the Allies cannot muster up the ability to help the US achieve its goals Washington will look elsewhere to conduct operations in the future. This is in line with realism's state centralism and emphasis on power as the lifeblood of international relations. Furthermore the proponents of this position underline the deep divide created across the Atlantic by the highly differing views on the War on Terror. The War on Terror, they argue, has not proved sufficient to conjure up alliance unity in the manner of the apocalyptic threats of the Cold War. Rupp (2006:2-3) writes:

Although NATO members have made considerable efforts to identify new threats and missions, since 1991 no unifying set of priorities has surfaced. Many dangers to Western security have emerged in the post-Cold War period – the rise of Al Qaeda is arguably the most significant – however, these issues have not unified the NATO members in common purpose. In absence of a menace to their vital interests... NATO will continue to prove less and less valuable to its members with each passing year.

The implicit link to realism here is that the (lacking) source of Alliance unity is defined to be external. More precisely the lacking unity is explained by the absence of a sufficiently powerful external threat to hold the alliance together and create internal

cohesion. NATO unity and cohesion is thus solely a product of its member states responding to the external environment that is the international structure – and not something that is built and sustained from within.

Moreover, the emphasis placed upon, and the dividing power accredited to, the (im)balance of military capabilities between the US and the other allies is greater viewed through the realist lens, as opposed to the liberal institutional lens. In an alliance construed as a security community the value of military contributions will to a larger degree be measured in terms of the political legitimacy and the commitment to the community they bring to bear, contrary to a more materialistic measurement of fire power. In the liberal institutional view of NATO being a formalization and sustainer of transatlantic cultural and political brotherhood, in the form of a security community; it can be argued that the form and size of military contributions, matter less than the *political act* of contribution that lies within *any* military contribution. Thus, by extension the nature of the military capabilities of the European allies matter less.

Furthermore, while the liberal institutional position viewed the turn to non-existential military engagements that followed the end of the Cold War as hearkening an era of optimism and increased cooperation, in general, as well as within the field of security. The overarching and all encompassing Cold War had kept frozen many a potential area of cooperation for international organizations including NATO. The realists, however, saw the end of the Cold War as destabilizing and a threat – not a boost – to international cooperation (Mearsheimer 1990, Wholforth 1995). Smaller military engagements, in pursuit of limited political aims, made a comeback in the early nineties. As an illustration former Norwegian Chief of Defence General Sverre Diesen draws a parallel back to the old days of limited *kabinetkrieg* (Diesen 2005). One must, however, note that these limited military operations where as a rule not unilateral, and the early nineties were to be known as the high years of UN-interventionism. Much of the optimism surrounding the utility of military force as a limited political tool, in an almost Clausewitzian manner, went down along with the infamous Black Hawk helicopter that was shot down over the streets of Mogadishu as early as 1993, and what ever optimism for the utility of military force was left dead after the tragic events of

the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and the preceding inaction of the international community (Hooker 2009).

The core of the matter, and this is where the two theories differ, is whether the downfall of the Soviet Union opened the door for wider and more cooperation, or whether the lack of an external enemy creating internal cohesion made greater room for the actions of the member states to be guided by what Brenner (1993:138,142) coined as pursuit of “*a more narrow conception of national interest*”. In a “non-existential” conflict such as NATO’s engagement in Afghanistan one would from a realist perspective expect the actions of the member states to be guided by just such a narrower conception of national interest at the expense of the common good. This is in line with the classical concept of *free riding*, and the problems of *collective actions* and *collective goods* (See: Lepgold 1998, Sandler 2000). The removal of the threat of global terrorism can be viewed as just such a non-excludable and non-rivalrous collective good. These problems should, however, in accordance with realism be overridden if there exists an adequate external threat forcing cohesion upon the allies. This is an interesting proposition in terms of the quite substantial set of national caveats placed upon troops in ISAF.

To sum up, in realism the Alliance is thus defined to be an *arena* for the interest of its most powerful member(s) to play out within, and not an *actor* in its own right. Liberal institutionalism however underlines NATO’s historic record of perseverance and its development into a value based security community, and thus reads Afghanistan and the future of NATO in this light. The validity of these theoretically founded arguments here presented is empirically explored in the concluding chapter. It is an ambition that this thesis might be but a small contribution also in this grander theoretical debate.

In the next chapter I will discuss the Research Methodology.

3 Research Methodology

There are, as with all things in life and science, both advantages and disadvantages to every method, and a list of possible pitfalls to be navigated if one is to keep to the appropriate standard of validity and reliability. In the following I present a deliberation over my methodological choices. First I will discuss the “longitudinally divided Single Case Study” methodology. Then I will discuss the definitions of the three analytical concepts, and operationalize what is meant by *unifying* and *dividing* in reference to each dimension. Finally, I discuss the concept of caveats and its implications for the analysis.

3.1 Single Case Study

My object of study is NATO unity. Single N case study is my research design. The present war in Afghanistan is my chosen case. The American, and subsequently NATO, led Afghanistan War is here a case of a major external event impacting on an international organization. NATO’s adaptation to American led alliance transformation, and Europe’s role in the Afghan War over the last decade are the issues I wish to directly illuminate in order to answer my research question. What I ultimately aspire to shed light on is the mechanisms driving change and cooperation in international organizations. As for method I will apply within case time comparison. Consequently longitudinally dividing the original single case in to two (or more) units (in my case four), divided by time and thus facilitating analytical comparison. George and Bennett (2005:166-167) gives this method the highly describing name of the “before and after” method. The analysis will build on relevant published research, NATO, UN and government documents. As to ensure the validity of the findings, claims are as much as possible founded in multiple sources.

The major advantage of this quasi-experimental method is that, given that the units of comparison in reality are the same units at different points in time, there are a lot of variables naturally held constant. The main challenge to the validity of the analysis is isolating the causally relevant variables from the almost endless list of possible

variables that may or may not have effected upon the alliance in my period of interest which spans from 2001 to 2010. This thesis will, with one minor – but quite important – exception, deal exclusively with the impact of the Afghanistan War. That exception is a brief deliberation of the transatlantic effects of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003-2010), which were of such a magnitude that they not only directly affected NATO's Afghanistan effort, but carried so much weight of their own that any discussion of transatlantic relations in over the last decade would be hampered if one did not somehow deal with the impact of Iraq. Having said that, the analysis herein conducted is solely devoted to the transatlantic impact of the War on Terror within NATO manifested through the War in Afghanistan.

My chosen “before” – my baseline – for comparison is the year 1999 which is the year that marks the Alliances 50th anniversary. It was also the year the Alliance adopted its former Strategic Concept³, and it is the year that NATO for the first time ever conducted offensive combat operations, on Belgrade in OAF. Furthermore 1999 will be remembered as a watershed in the sense that former Warsaw-Pact states were included into the Alliance. At that time there was no such concept as the War on Terror guiding US foreign policy. September 11th 2001 marked the beginning of a new era in American security strategy. The terrorist attack set off the chain of events that ended in the invasion of Afghanistan on October 7th the same year. NATO's involvement at this time was limited to the maritime efforts of Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) patrolling the Mediterranean Sea. Theatrical involvement under NATO command was not realised until October 2003. Two years had then past since the initial US led invasion. How did NATO change in the time between 2001 - 2003? Did NATO adapt to the novel realities of the new paradigm of War on Terror? By setting NATO's 2003 entry into Afghanistan as the first of the “after” points of comparison, my analysis will aim to answer these questions. The next watershed is the completion of ISAF's geographical expansion in 2006 when NATO assumed responsibility for the entirety of Afghanistan. I have chosen the period 2003 - 2006 as

³ Which was replaced at the Lisbon summit of November 2010

the next period of comparison. The third period of comparison is 2006 – 2009 during which the Afghan campaign changed dramatically in nature started to develop into a COIN operation. This, as I explore in the analysis, affected the allies greatly. The fourth and final period in time chosen is 2009 - 2010. January 2009 marked the first change of American President since the start of the War on Terror. The first two years of Obama's presidency form the last analytical period of my analysis.

Central to the analysis is assessing NATO's adaptation to the US paradigm of War on Terror. In order to achieve this one needs a clear understanding of what the War on Terror entails and how it has evolved since 2001. The shift from the first, to the second Bush Administration in 2005, and the change brought by the introduction of the Obama White House in 2009 are the most significant watersheds. To gain a measure of how the concept of the War on Terror has evolved in the period the American National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Military Strategy (NMS) are utilized. The NSS is the supreme strategy document of the US drafted by the President and is purposely general in content. The NMS on the other hand is written by the Joint Chiefs of Staff while guided by the NSS and brings the provisions of the guiding document down to a more specific level. Together they form a picture of the ruling American security paradigm at the time of their conception. From Bush in 2002 to Obama's 2010 NSS there have been significant changes, as well as equally significant continuities, in the conceptualization of the War on Terror. This development is incorporated into the analysis.

3.2 Operationalizing Unity and Division

In my analysis I evaluate the impact of the War in Afghanistan and the American paradigm of War on Terror on NATO's transformation. Transformation, for the purpose of this thesis, is *expressions of allied adaption to US initiatives for change in NATO*. As to avoid a monolithic concept of NATO that might obscure as much as it enlightens, I have, as mentioned in the introduction, divided the analysis in accordance with three analytical dimensions. This allows for the analysis to differentiate, recognize and incorporate forces pulling in different and perhaps opposing directions

within NATO, which in turn provides the opportunity for a more nuanced analysis, and thus potentially greater validity.

3.2.1 The Political Dimension

NATO is and remains an intergovernmental consensus based organization made up of 28 sovereign member states. The politics of NATO thereby is a bargain composed of a variety of national interests, brought to the table by states of greatly varying economical and military power. The most powerful of which is the US. The remaining 27 allies have their own national interest which may, or may not, correspond to the American point of view. Major external events like the terrorist attacks of 9/11 should, however, according to realist theory unite the allies, as a common threat creates converging national interests and suppresses divergent ones. NATO more so than other international organizations tends to be viewed as an actor in its own right, as opposed to being a mere arena, and an aggregation of its many sovereign members, where consensus is the rule of decision. This is a consequence of NATO's Cold War legacy where the bipolar situation lent itself to a simplified picture of the world in terms of two unitary blocks (Berdal & Ucko 2010:102).

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the arena where the allies either clash or conform in the setting of NATO's political course, and it is the alliance's supreme decision making forum. This makes it highly relevant in terms of shedding light on whether Afghanistan has wielded a unifying or dividing influence in regards to the political dimension of the Alliance. The NAC has effective political authority and powers of decision. It is the principal decision-making body and oversees the political and military process relating to security issues affecting the whole Alliance. It can meet at the level of Permanent Representatives (or Ambassadors), at the level of Foreign and Defence Ministers, and at the level of Heads of State and Government. It is chaired by the Secretary General. Permanent Representatives act on instruction from their capitals, informing and explaining the views and the policy decisions of their governments to their colleagues around the table. The Council has an important public profile and issues declarations and communiqués explaining the Alliance's policies and

decisions. The decelerations produced by the NAC, as well as documents from the NATO bureaucracy, serve as part of the basis for the analysis.

Precisely describing and creating a coherent definition of political *unity* and political *division* is a major challenge. And may in fact be the main shortcoming of the NATO literature at large. Thies (2009:7) writes on the much used academic concept of “*crisis in the Alliance*” which is closely related to my analytical concept of *division*.

None of the many writers who have contributed to the NATO-in-crisis literature have defined their terms in a way that would permit a disinterested observer to know when the Alliance is in crisis and when it is not. Nor do they conceptualize these episodes in a way that would make it possible to reconcile conflicting claims about the relative severity of various crises or even about when they begin and end. Instead, judgments about whether the Alliance is in crisis and how bad the situations have become are typically based on indicators like harsh language, petty behavior, or the number of points at issue among members.

So, how does one operationalize political *unity* and *division*? As the saying goes, actions will always speak louder than words. In operationalizing political *unity* and *division* one faces the task of moving beyond rhetoric. As Theis (2006:5) further argues “...the widespread reliance on impressionistic evidence has rendered the NATO-in-crisis literature inherently subjective and imprecise.” Therefore, the line of inference must run from actions on the ground, such as troop contributions, and then onto the political level.

Harsh choices of words and the number of contested issues are poor indicators of *division*. While such variables at face value may seem as fine measures of a falling out, they may, however, also be taken to account for exactly the opposite. Harsh exchanges of words through media and diplomatic channels may be indicators that the member states are heavily invested in reaching a decision and convinced of the importance of persuading their fellow allies. This is particularly the case in instances where harsh debate and diverging starting points are followed by decision and action.

As for the cases that pan out in indecision and inaction, the presiding quarrels may in fact be an indication of division. The point is that harsh debate and rhetorical grandstanding in itself does not equal division. Paradoxically the perceived importance of alliance unity among the member states may be what drives the actions that are subsequently taken into account by observers as signs of division. Take for instance the 1999 Belgrade bombing campaign. When bombing commenced on the 24th March it was after no less than a full year of diplomatic back and forth across the Atlantic. In fact, the American frustrations about the European lack of capabilities and interoperability in the field, combined with their political meddling and concerns over the legal grounds for war, led to some transatlantic name-calling and has been dubbed a major crisis in NATO history (See: Theis 2009). Walker (2001:11) rapports that the brusqueness and domination of the US in face of the Kosovo crisis left the Europeans and especially the British feeling trampled and aggravated. In spite of this today the Kosovo experience is often hailed as NATO's greatest moment. Hallams (2010:42) even goes as far as celebrating it as "*a triumph of unity*", and goes on to suggest that the success of Kosovo "... is testimony to the ability of the alliance to transcend the disagreements and disputes... ...and remain unified". Alliance solidarity withstood the test of bringing down Milosevic and cohesion was kept for 78 straight days of bombing even without a clear UN-mandate. It is highly paradoxical and misguided to take whatever disagreement, or harsh exchange of words, that may have preceded this momentous display of alliance unity to account for a divided alliance in crisis.

As to the *number of contested issues* this is nothing but an indication of the high relevance of the organization in the minds of its members. An international alliance in crisis or one suffering deep division is likely to be an alliance out of work; a place of silence rather than debate.

In assessing the political unity and division I have focused on the concept of alliance "burden-sharing". During the Cold War the term "burden-sharing" in a NATO context referred mainly to financial issues such as contributions to the common NATO budget. For the purposes of this thesis the term applies to the sharing of the military burden on the ground in Afghanistan. Sometimes labelled as "risk-sharing" (for instance Sperling

and Webber 2009; Ringsmose 2010). The political will to engage in high-risk operations is a sign of a commitment to the unity of the alliance that moves beyond rhetoric. Examples of three measurable factors of allied burden-sharing are: i) deployment to the south and east, ii) national caveats limiting troops and iii) proportion of combat-deaths.

3.2.2 The Organizational Dimension

I will analyze the rationales behind, and the consequences of, the alterations made in the organizational structure of the alliance in relevant time period (2001-2010).

The US used the first NATO summit after the 2001 Article 5 invocation, Prague 2002, to (re)launch a series of proposals towards the reformation of the Alliance. To what extent these proposals, which were passed in 2002, have been realized or not in the time up to 2010, will serve as the measure of the Afghanistan engagement's *unifying* or *dividing* effect. The analysis will aim to reveal to what degree, the alliance which *in the past has failed* to follow-up on US led initiatives to transform, for example the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) of 1999 (Knutsen 2007), in light of the War on Terror paradigm and its large role in the War in Afghanistan this time has been able to reform.

The 2002 Prague Summit agreed to establish a new command structure initiated by the US, in order for the Alliance to adapt to the realities of the new threat assessments following 9/11. The Allied Command Operations (ACO) and the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) were established. By 2003 NATO was deeply involved in Afghanistan and through ISAF the new command structure has been put to the test.

At the Prague Summit the allies also agreed to create a NATO Response Force (NRF) that was to be a standing force ready to deploy anywhere, at any time, on extremely short notice. This was also an American initiative to make NATO more suitable to Washington's vision of a NATO adapted to the new War on Terror. The NRF is the most significant and most substantial organizational development in NATO over the last ten years. Former SACEUR General James Jones called it “*one of the most*

important changes in the North Atlantic Alliance since the signing of the Washington treaty” (quoted in Kugler 2007:9). The development of the NRF is thus the main, but not the only, focus of the Organizational Dimension. The NRF is not directly connected to NATO’s engagement in Afghanistan, but it is an integral part of its context that is the War on Terror paradigm, and has been affected by the ISAF operation.

Indicators of successful transformation, in other words – transformation making the alliance suitable to the US’s demands, will be signs of greater transatlantic alliance *unity* than occurred before 2002. And indicators of non-successful transformations will be signs of unchanged or greater *division* within the alliance⁴.

3.2.3 The Military Dimension

In terms of the military dimension I shall evaluate the alliances transformation to increase the level of military interoperability between the allies. Here, as well, the developments of the Prague Summit of 2002 and specifically the PCC, will be at the center of the analysis. The degree of successful implementation of the capabilities commitments made at the Prague Summit, serves as my indicator of unity and division. The PCC consists of a set of concrete commitments for NATO members to improve their capabilities in eight areas, either individually or collectively. I shall focus on the collective efforts (such as creating common air fueling capabilities), as these are the most relevant in addressing my research question, and analyze how the implementation either has been impaired or driven forward by the American War on Terror paradigm. Here *greater unity* is operationalized as when PCC implementation can be deemed to have been achieved and propelled by the War on Terror paradigm, or Alliance’s operations in Afghanistan – or a *source of division* in the opposite case.

The very details of transformation programs such as the PCC, and the reports made on the member states' progress in fulfilling their requirements, are classified. This is of

⁴This line of reasoning also applies to the military dimension

course due to the military nature of the matter. However, information made public, unclassified reports, and indirect indications, can to be used to overcome this challenge to reliability in scholarly pursuits such as this (e.g. Ringsmose 2010; Lagoa & Piella 2010).

When mentioning the PCC in this context it is important to note that the PCC to a very large degree is a new name on an old acquaintance that is the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) of 1999. Transformation of military capabilities has been a recurring issue for the Alliance ever since the end of the Cold War (see Ringsmose 2010; Sperling and Webber 2009). I wish to emphasize that my claim is *not* that American War on Terror paradigm, and the subsequent snubbing of NATO in relation to Afghanistan, caused the US's desire for alliance transformation embodied in the PCC. This desire existed well before September 11th 2001. In fact the large similarities between the provisions of the DCI and the PCC clearly demonstrate that such a causal claim is false. What I *do* claim, however, is that the initial sidelining of NATO in Afghanistan, and the new US security paradigm, served as the central rationale behind the re-launching of the transformation efforts under a new and potentially unifying heading. Article 3 of the 2002 Prague Declaration makes explicit reference to 9/11, it reads:

Recalling the tragic events of 11 September 2001 and our subsequent decision to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, we have approved a comprehensive package of measures, based on NATO's Strategic Concept, to strengthen our ability to meet the challenges to the security of our forces, populations and territory, from wherever they may come. Today's decisions will provide for balanced and effective capabilities within the Alliance so that NATO can better carry out the full range of its missions and respond collectively to those challenges, including the threat posed by terrorism and by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery."

The issue of Afghanistan has dominated the NATO agenda ever since 2001 and certainly has served as the central context in which the realization of the

transformation efforts has occurred. It is in this capacity – as the rationale for re-launch and context of realization - that I propose to utilize the PCC in shedding light on Afghanistan's impact on NATO unity.

3.3 Caveats

Caveats are national limitations on what NATO soldiers can, and cannot, do that are imposed by the providing state. Each national contingent has a “red card” holder which at any time can override the NATO commander and bar the inclusion of that states troops in a certain operation. Some caveats are formal and written, others are informal and are products of a constantly running dialogue between the “red card” holder in Afghanistan and his home Capital. All caveat details are classified information unavailable to the public. The latter mentioned unwritten caveats are especially controversial as they severely hamper tactical planning (Austerwald and Saideman 2009).

National caveats placed on troops in international operations are not simply a military issue, but very much also a window into the inner workings of international multilateral cooperation. States are always weighing the concerns of upholding their national sovereignty on the one hand, against beneficial multilateral cooperation that requires surrender of a certain degree of that very sovereignty, on the other. Nowhere is upholding sovereignty viewed as more paramount than within the realm of security and defence. These issues go right to the very core of traditional Westphalian statehood. Moreover, the nations are being asked nothing less than to risk the lives of its young. This is important to keep in mind when discussing why even NATO cannot conjure up caveat-free troop contributions. As Auerswald and Saideman (2009:5) writes: *“Even NATO, the most powerful, institutionalized and successful security organization in the world is bound by this limitation [caveats]”*.

The field of security and military cooperation requires the highest extent of strategic thinking and centralized planing. As Sun Tzu thought us – tactics without strategy is merely the noise before defeat. These counter working forces of national sovereignty

and the need for international coherence makes security cooperation uniquely interesting in a scholarly perspective. And makes it evermore interesting to explore how international organizations precisely within the field of security handle these challenges.

Caveats are military limitations with major political connotations. In the analysis caveats are thus an integral part of the analysis in relation to both the direct military consequences of the limitations, and the indirect political rationales behind them and the political ramifications they create.

In the next chapter the analysis now outlined is executed.

4 Analysis

In this Chapter the analysis is conducted in the manner that was foreshadowed Chapter 3. The aim is to unveil significant sings of *unity* and *division* in accordance to the political, organizational and military dimensions of NATO.

The Chapter is divided in to four sub-chapters. Sub-chapter 4.1 deals with the time period 2001 - 2003 when NATO was not involved in the Afghan theatre. Then sub-chapter 4.2 moves on to the time from 2003 to 2006 when NATO took command over ISAF. After this follows sub-chapter 4.3 which covers the period form 2006 - 2009 when the insurgency was gaining momentum. And finally the sub-chapter 4.4 covers the Americanization of ISAF under Obama from 2009 to 2010. Each sub-chapter is concluded by a section that summarizes the main developments of the period in accordance with the three dimensions of unity and division.

4.1 2001 - 2003 NATO Sidelined

In a paradoxical twist of fate it was an attack on the US that led to the inaugural invocation of the Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The September 11th 2001 attack on the US was deemed an attack against all allies. The paradox of course being that when the Article 5 was crafted, now 61 years ago, the motivation was to ease the minds of European leaders and deter the Soviet ones, by reassuring the fact that in case of a new war emerging in Europe, the US would not fail to act as it did in both 1914 and 1939. In 2001, however, it was not a conventional attack on Europe by a rival state, but a highly unconventional attack on the US by a non-state actor, that was to be the prelude to the historic inaugural invocation. Leaving these historical ironies aside, the fact remains that it was a terrorist attack on the US that led to Europe offering up its collective solidarity, and the invocation Article 5. The US, however, was not interested in what NATO was offering, and proceeded with the Alliance left on the sidelines. This paved that way for the extensive transformation efforts at the 2002 Prague Summit. The period was at large, characterized by the politically unifying effects of the new paradigm of War on Terror, but NATO was in 2001 exposed as

organizationally and militarily divided across the Atlantic.

4.1.1 Impetus for Change

On the 11th of September 2001 the US and its European allies stood united in tragedy. Nearly three thousand people were killed in the attacks against New York and Washington. A prevailing sense of transatlantic brotherhood emerged in Europe and elsewhere as the dust settled on the streets of downtown Manhattan. Perhaps *Le Monde* captured the sentiment of the time best when it famously proclaimed “*We are all Americans now*”.

NATO went through forty years of existential ideological struggle facing its counterpart the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. It then proceeded into the turbulent nineties searching for a purpose. The Alliance moved out of area and fired its first shots in Bosnia with *Operation Deliberate Force* in 1995, and conducted a highly controversial air bombing campaign on Belgrade under *Operation Allied Force* in 1999. Nevertheless, despite its eventful history the Alliance had never before invoked its pillar commitment – the Article 5 solidarity. Needless to say this is an important turning point in the history of the transatlantic alliance and evidence of the greatly unifying effect created by the attacks on the political level. The Allies were unexpectedly united in horror and condemnation of the terrorist acts of 9/11. The unusual degree of emotion in the language of the Statement given by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in an extraordinary assembly on the evening of September 11th is palpable. The final words of the short statement read:

At this critical moment, the United States can rely on its 18 Allies in North America and Europe for assistance and support. NATO solidarity remains the essence of our Alliance. Our message to the people of the United States is that we are with you. Our message to those who perpetrated these unspeakable crimes is equally clear: you will not get away with it.

(NATO 2001)

A strong sense of transatlantic unity was (re)created in common despise of the

atrocities of 9/11, and the following newborn sense of a uniting purpose led to the almost immediate invocation of the Article 5. In line with the expectations of realist theory 9/11 brought to the table internal cohesion and unity created by an external factor. The Article 5 invocation followed little more than 36 hours after the fall of the Twin Towers. It was passed with little debate and without any deliberation of what exactly such an invocation would entail. Although they did not oppose invocation, only the Dutch delegation raised the issue of the NAC needing to debate and clarify the implications of such a momentous act as the inaugural invocation. The Dutch proposal did however not gain much ground (Hallams 2010:58). This despite that fact that those familiar with the North Atlantic Treaty will know, namely that the famous Article 5 by no means is as absolute and an automatic deceleration of war, as is at times portrayed. On the contrary the Article was intentionally constructed with a certain degree of flexibility. The Article states that every ally shall individually or in concert undertake “*such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force*” (NATO 1949). By implication the use of force is a very possible, however not inherently necessary consequence of invocation. Although the generality of the Article 5 and the gravity of the situation called for clarifications to be made, the prevailing line of thought in the NAC was that this was not the time for such deliberations. The sense of urgency and need for immediate action was strong: “*...there was a kin of tidal wave, this is not the time to ask that question now because we need to show we’re behind the US*” (NATO official 2007, quoted in Hallams 2010:58). The September 12th invocation was an act of solidarity and bears the hallmarks of an emotional gut response rather than a well considered strategic response. It is however a strong testament to a united transatlantic alliance. The US’s response, however, was not as the Europeans expected.

Then NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson revealed in a BCC interview that it was he who first raised the issue of Article 5 with the Americans in a phone call with Secretary of State Colin Powell. At this time Lord Robertson already had a draft statement ready. Lord Robertson further revealed that the initiative took Secretary Powell utterly by surprise, but after a 15 minute thinking break he called Lord

Robertson back and said “*Yeah, this is of real interest*” (BBC News 2002). This goes to show that although the US was foremost in the minds of NATO following 9/11, NATO was not foremost in the mind of the US. This led to an initial clash of perceptions as to NATO’s role in the coming War on Terror.

Following their decision to invoke Article 5 the NATO allies decided to increase intelligence sharing, tighten security of US facilities on their soil, grant wide clearances of US and allied flights, and access to sea and airports. The most significant material NATO contribution, however, was the dispatching of five NATO AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control Systems) planes from their base in Germany to patrol the east coast of the US. These limited measures are symbolic of NATO’s, at best, indirect role in America’s War on Terror, and an indication of the transatlantic military divide of the time.

On the 7th of October 2001 the US together with the UK launched the invasion of Afghanistan under the name Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Despite of the Article 5 invocation just under a month prior OEF was not a NATO operation. After the invasion OEF was to be, and is to this day, a counter-terrorist combat operation tasked to root out and destroy the Taliban and Al-Qaida.

The capturing of Kabul and the outing of the Taliban from power was conducted at a formidable pace. This is in line with the prescriptions of the strategic dogma known as the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) which gained popularity in the US following the successful Gulf War of 1991. The coalition forces worked together with the local Northern Alliance, a group Afghans who never yielded to Taliban rule and held a small enclave of terrain in the northern most part of the country even at the high point of Taliban power, and captured Kabul within a mere two months. The campaign was truly a merger of extreme high-tech and low-tech components working in unison. The US forces utilizing Precision Guided Missiles and Night Vision Goggles, while the Northern Alliance rode on horses firing their trusted Kalashnikovs (Hammes 2006:Chap.11).

With Kabul under control an interim government led by Harmid Karzai was created at the Bonn conference of December 5th 2001. The interim government was also

sanctioned by the UNSC Resolution 1386, the same resolution that established ISAF, which was initially under British command. The command was to rotate between troop contributors every six months, Turkey succeeded the British. The last to hold the post of ISAF command, before NATO stepped in, was Germany and the Netherlands in a combined effort. ISAF was at the time limited to Kabul and mandated to “*to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas, so that the Afghan Interim Authority as well as the personnel of the United Nations can operate in a secure environment*” (UNSC Res. 1386).

Despite invoking Article 5 NATO played no role in Afghanistan at this time. The US had been taken by surprise by the historical invocation, and although they certainly appreciated the support and solidarity as a political gesture, it became clear that NATO did not play a lead part in the war plans laid out by the Bush White House and the Rumsfeld Department of Defense (DoD) (Hallams 2010:58). This is highly indicative of the underlying organizational and military capabilities division across the Atlantic that was brought to the surface by Afghanistan. The US had in OEF opted for an ad hoc coalition of the willing and able. Instead of utilizing NATO’s unique permanent command structure the US made it clear, through Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz’s appearance at the September 27th NATO Defence Ministers meeting, that they would only be seeking contributions from states willing to engage in operations under direct US command. The US managed to build a fairly large temporary alliance of the willing. By May 2002 the coalition consisted of 68 states and 20 states had deployed more than 16 000 troops to the US Central Command (US DoD 2002). The coalition included political support from all the allies, and 14 of the then 19 NATO states contributed with troops to the OEF, most notably the UK but with contributions from other key European allies such as Germany and France. This is a strong indication of that while 9/11 created transatlantic political unity, the organizational and military division that plagued the Alliance led to the “sharp end” of this political unity being expressed outside of NATO.

France made both major naval and air force contributions to OEF. In course of the first year following the invasion France, as the only coalition country, contributed with

fighter aircrafts to the Manas base in Kirgizstan and provided close air support capability. France's naval contribution to OEF was also significant and in fact accounted for approximately 24 percent of their entire naval force (US DoD 2002).

As of May 2002 there were 2 560 German personnel operating within the OEF Central Command (CENTCOM) and German Special Operations Forces (SOF) were performing the full spectrum of SOF missions in Afghanistan. In addition to a naval contribution in terms of maritime patrol, Germany also submitted a battalion-sized Infantry Task Force operating in Kabul as part of ISAF which at this point in time was not a NATO operation (US DoD 2002).

Major international players like the economic powerhouse that is Germany, and the French with their permanent seat on the UNSC and history of strong sovereignty and anti-American de Gaullism, contributed significantly to the US's coalition of the willing. This in spite of the lack of political influence that is likely to be wielded towards the US in an ad hoc coalition, in contrast to NATO where the US is bound by institutional mechanisms, foremost of which is consensus as the decision rule on all levels. Even though the US's unilateral reaction to 9/11 and NATO's Article 5 invocation certainly displeased the European allies greatly⁵, the military contributions to the US's War on Terror through OEF indicates that transatlantic political unity was dominant in the period following 9/11. Divisions were, however, revealed in relation to the organizational and military dimensions of NATO. This division, albeit present, was, however, far from devastating to transatlantic relations between the NATO allies. Although NATO as an organization was completely sidelined in Afghanistan from 2001 to early 2003 the NATO members stood, at the time, strongly united on the political level in the War on Terror conducted in Afghanistan through OEF. NATO's problem, so to speak, was that due to the organizational and military transatlantic division the political unity was expressed through channels other than NATO. The main initial impact of the War on Terror in regard to the organizational and military

⁵ Interviews conducted by Hallams (2010) reveal that a feeling of disappointment over the US's decision to circumvent NATO in invading Afghanistan following the Alliance's was prominent among NATO officials

dimensions was the reinvigoration of NATO transformation towards the American perception of what NATO ought to be.

The NATO members' military contribution to the OEF is also an indication of that the much debated transatlantic "capabilities gap", although a real and important factor in the US's assessment of NATO, and a source of division in the transatlantic relations of the Alliance, is not an absolute divide. The decision to bypass NATO was also influenced by the ideologically founded neo-conservative unilateralism of the Rumsfeld DoD⁶, and the prevailing American view on the lesson learnt from the "committee war" of the Balkans in the late nineties, and not an unavoidable consequence of the transatlantic capabilities gap. The unilateralism of the US in opting for OEF before NATO was potentially a very dividing decision for the political dimension of the Alliance. The European contributions to OEF, however, illustrate that the unity created by the perceived threat of terrorism following 9/11 trumped the potential division inherent in sidelining NATO. The main consequence of the US decision to proceed in Afghanistan with the American commanded OEF and not NATO is that a wedge was driven between NATO as an organization and the battlefield where its most important member was fighting its purpose defining war. This led to the realization in European capitals that NATO needed to change in order to stay relevant and thus produced political unity, not division as one might have expected.

By bypassing the NATO command structure and thus the relentlessly demanding consensus building processes the US had gained complete operational and political control over their first decisive step into the War on Terror. Regardless of its accuracy the dominant US perception of NATO's handling of the Balkan wars of the nineties is negative (Sperling and Webber 2009; Hallams 2010). This was due much to the fact that target selections in the 1999 air campaign on Belgrade had become such a highly politicized issue demanding of the US that they drag every selection through the slow gears of the consensus run machinery that is NATO. President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld was not intent on another "war by committee". However, everything comes

⁶ For more neo-conservatism's influence on the Rumsfeld DoD see Packer (2005)

at a price – including full operational and political control. In an ad hoc alliance of the willing, not but the leading nation is truly invested in the project. The remaining owe their allegiance not to the greater goal of the operation, such as fighting Al-Qaeda, but to their individual political aims, such as bettering relations with the US. In a permanent institutionalized alliance like NATO where every nation is involved in the decision making, every nation is also bound by a feeling of participation and ownership and thus committed towards implementation of these decisions by political prestige (Kay and Khan 2009:511).

In sum, the War on Terror initially created *political* unity and revealed *Organizational* and *military* division. This is demonstrated by the Article 5 invocation and the organizational and military transformation committed to by Europe at the Prague Summit in 2002. The years of NATO's non-existing role in Afghanistan and the European military contributions instead being channeled through OEF is a clear indicator of *organizational* and *military* transatlantic division and disharmony within NATO. The newly created transatlantic *political* unity was expressed almost solely outside of NATO – through OEF. In the eyes of the US, NATO was not suited for the demands of the War on Terror. The realities of NATO's organization and military capabilities did not match the US's wish list. The political unity created was thus directed at bridging the transatlantic organizational and military division, rather than being directed directly onto the Afghan battlefield. This political unity is manifested in the creation of the new Command Structure, the NATO Response Force and the Prague Capabilities Commitments in 2002. The notion that the US by 2001 was uninterested in NATO is completely undermined by the substantial aforementioned *US initiated* transformation efforts. On the contrary, reshaping NATO in the mold of the War on Terror was a central part of the paradigm from day one. Furthermore, a central component of global force projection is access to military bases on foreign land. In this respect alliances and partnerships are crucial to the US security strategy. It became clear in 2001 that NATO had a distance to travel if it were to mend the transatlantic division in the military and organizational dimensions. This will be demonstrated by

NATO to go the distance and undertake the needed transformation on the other hand further speak towards political unity.

A monolithic analytical concept of NATO does not provide the opportunity for making the crucial distinction between the political, organizational and military dimensions of the matter, and thus fails to identify the counter working forces inherent in NATO's transatlantic dynamic brought to bare in the analysis above. Rupp (2006:93) is a prime example of such a failure when he, in his analysis of NATO's first year following 9/11, argues that: *"Instead of unifying and responding effectively to the new dangers in the system, the member states of NATO experienced their greatest sustained internal conflict since the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949"*. On the contrary, as the next sub-chapter shall reveal, the Prague Summit of spring 2002 was a display of transatlantic cooperation and unity through the allies seriously addressing the issues plaguing NATO and implementing strong measures to correct them.

4.1.2 The NRF and the PCC – Driving Transformation

Against the backdrop of the recent American led invasion of Afghanistan and the inaugural Article 5 invocation, the allies agreed on one of the most substantial structural revisions in the history of the Alliance at the 2002 Prague Summit. The present organizational structure of the Allied Command Operations (ACO) and the Allied Command Transformations (ACT) was established. Heading the ACT is the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT). The alliance now had a strategic commander at four-star General rank specifically and exclusively tasked with promoting transformation. From its creation in 2002 to 2009 the position was held by an American Officer which was double-hatted as chief of US Joint Forces Command, which is responsible for capabilities development for the US (NATO 2010b). This double-hatting is natural considering that one of the ACTs core tasks is ensuring transatlantic interoperability and bringing European military capabilities closer to the American standard. It is also indicative of how it is the US that is the main proponent of NATO transformation, also under the Paradigm of War on Terror, and strongly undermines the notion of the US being disinterested in NATO. In 2009 the SACT

position was left to a French General Stéphane Abrial as part of France fully rejoining the NATO command structure.

Furthermore, the allies at Prague came together in embrace of a number of specific instruments and requirements known as the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC). This was an expression of political unity, in order to mend the existing organizational transatlantic divisions. The new structure is to a large extent a tool for shaping NATO in the image of the US. As the 1999 OAF campaign on Belgrade had made abundantly clear the transatlantic military capability gap was a very real challenge for the Alliance. In the OAF the US contributed with 83 percent of the total number of weapons delivered and 66 percent of the total number of aircrafts involved. It also conducted more than 90 percent of the air-to-air refueling, as well as all tactical jamming capabilities, and contributed the majority of airlift capabilities (Perets *et al.* 2001:230-234, Lambeth 2001:64 & Hallams 2010:48). Although Europe delivered the majority of troops to KFOR in the aftermath of OAF, these peacekeepers operated in a relatively secure environment and this does not change the fact that a transatlantic capabilities gap for advanced operations existed. Williams (2008:69) quotes one anonymous US Official stating that “*when the European forces are so incapable and the European governments are so restrictive ...the stronger argument is for those who want to go it alone*”. At the turn of the millennium only Britain and France of the European allies could muster a substantial number of expeditionary forces ready to be deployed at strategic distances from their homeland. The American security neighborhood is, as it was then, a global one, and global force projection is thus the cornerstone of American military planning and strategy. The NSS of 2002 reads “*The war against terrorists of global reach is a global enterprise of uncertain duration*” it goes on to state that “*The United States will build on these common interests to promote global security*”.

The 2004 NSS of underlines the importance of force projection:

Enhancing the US overseas presence and footprint must improve the ability of regional forces to employ an expeditionary approach in response to regional and global contingencies.

Multilateralism has since the end of Cold War grown in importance in terms of building political legitimacy for military action (Matlary 2006). It was therefore in the vital interest of the US, that the European allies are able to provide the kind of forces and capabilities that fit in to the American paradigm of war for the 21st century. That is highly mobile expeditionary forces deployable at extremely short notice in response of a sudden change in the security picture, such as a terrorist attack. As then Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld argued at the NATO Defence Ministers meeting in Warsaw months before the Prague Summit *“If NATO does not have a force that is quick and agile, which can deploy in days or weeks instead of months or years, then it will not have much to offer the world in the twenty-first century”* (BCC News World Edition 2002). The allies took the Secretary at his word and at the Prague summit they decided to create the NATO Response Force (NRF). The NRF was to be the locomotive crafted to drive the much sought after military modernization of NATO-Europe. The Prague Summit Declaration declared that the NRF was to be a:

...technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed... the NRF will also be a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance’s military capabilities

(NATO 2002)

The NRF was from the very start an ambitious military project to say the least. The envisioned quick and agile response force fits perfectly into the US military paradigm on how to win the War on Terror. The 2004 US National Military Strategy underlines the importance of strategic agility, which it defines as the ability to rapidly deploy, employ, sustain and redeploy forces to all regions in response to crisis. The NRF was to be NATO’s part in this vision. As Binnendijk and Kruger (2002:118), the American architects behind the original draft created for the NRF in early 2002, write on their

vision for the forthcoming spearhead force guiding transformation: “*a real force maintained at high readiness, capable of swiftly projecting power to distant areas outside Europe and then conducting demanding combat operations with US forces in wide spectrum of contingencies*”. Note the phrase “outside Europe”, the out-of-area debate of the nineties concerned the Balkans and other parts of Europe outside of NATO. By 2002 the Alliance had decided to prepare to go a significant leap further and step outside of Europe itself. This is an indication of the new politically unifying aftermath of 9/11.

This development is a direct consequence of the initial political unity created by the War on Terror. The Cold War notion of protecting the homeland lingered in most European capitals throughout the nineties and shaped their traditional image of Europe’s role in NATO and thus hampered any real transformation and modernization away from static and immobile national defence such as the failed DCI of 1999. While it is true that the early nineties marked the high point of UN interventionism and the decade saw NATO engage in two conflicts in the Balkans, military transformation in NATO-Europe was in fact limited. While European armies, air forces and navies contain smaller units of excellent quality they, with some exceptions, lacked the ability to project this power to far off regions such as Central-Asia. Furthermore, there existed a lack of ability to run larger integrated operations independently. NATO-Europe was “*dependent upon the United States, and... limited to contributing at the margins*” (Binnendijk and Kruger 2002). When the US and the UK in October of 2001 launched a major military invasion directly affecting European security without the continental Europe playing a serious military role it marked a watershed. NATO-Europe realized that further relevance and influence in NATO warranted significant change on their part. This explains the political unity expressed at the Prague Summit in 2002 in spite of the organizational and military transatlantic division of the time.

Moreover, in addition to military capability development there was a more indirect and political equally important side to the PCC and the NRF. As Ringsmose (2009:288) writes:

At its core the NRF initiative was conceived as a means to furnish the Atlantic Alliance with an agile and robust military tool, while at the same time inducing an expeditionary mind-set among the European allies. The two main tenets underpinning the construct was thus to craft a state-of-the-art multinational force and to generate military transformation “a la Americano”. On the political level, the major rationale behind the NRF was to strengthen the transatlantic link at a time of crisis.

Strengthening the transatlantic bond was always at the heart of the matter for the NRF. The nineties had left NATO-Europe deflated as it became apparent the European allies were not even able to ensure the peace and stability of their own continent. Greatly adding to the European frustrations at the time of the conception of the NRF was the fact that NATO was left on the sidelines in the invasion of Afghanistan. In 2001 the transatlantic capabilities gap had once again become a dividing issue in transatlantic relations. A 2007 report for the US Congress sums up the American position quite concisely: *“The aftermath of September 11th further highlighted allied military limitations vis-à-vis the United States”* (CRS Report 2007). Consensus based NATO has always been Europe’s best way to restrain the world’s only superpower. NATO has at the same time always been the US’s best way of ensuring a friendly, stable and democratic Europe (more or less) able and willing to contribute in realizing American national interests. European capitals recognized that something needed to be done if this fruitful relationship was to be kept alive. American unilateralist rhetoric was under the first Bush Administration at a highpoint and collations of the willing were operating in Afghanistan and preparing for Iraq. Given the unifying effects of this joint transatlantic interest of keeping NATO relevant, the willingness to change in accordance with American demands was present in NATO-Europe at Prague 2002. The political climate within NATO at the NRF’s inception in 2002 was quite favorable. The abrupt changes brought about by 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror was at this time wielding a politically unifying effect upon the Alliance that was not present before the terrorist attacks of 2001. This becomes apparent if one compares

the level of transatlantic commitment brought to bare in the PCC as opposed to the Defence Capabilities Initiative of 1999.

At the 1999 Washington 50th anniversary summit held as operations in the former Yugoslavia were still ongoing, the then 19 allies came to a consensus on a program for defence modernization of Europe – the DCI. As previously discussed the second Balkan war was the prelude to alliance concerns over a capability gap dividing the allies across the Atlantic. A disproportionate amount of fighter sorties were conducted by the US. The lack of interoperability of the European and American forces was a real issue, virtually forming a dark cloud over the Washington summit which strived to present a unified NATO embarking on its very first post Cold War enlargement and presenting its new Strategic Concept.

The DCI lists 59 specific measurements to reach the goal of increased interoperability and military transformation of NATO-Europe. The list of items was divided into five subsets: mobility and deployability, sustainability and logistics, effective engagement, survivability and consultation, command and control (Boland 1999). However, as a subsequent US Congressional report reveals – the allies did not deliver on their promise: *“Before long... ...analysts realized that DCI was not meeting its goals because the changes that had been agreed to required most countries to increase their defence spending. Most, however, did not.”* (CRS Report 2007).

The PCC of 2002 differ in a number of ways from its predecessor. Four central differences are the PCC: a) focuses on a lesser number of goals, b) emphasizes multinational cooperation and specialization c) requires specific commitments from member states, and d) was designed with a particular force in mind (the NRF) (CRS Report 2007). Where the DCI was divided into five general subsets, the PCC contains eight specific areas of improvement: i) chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence, ii) intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition, iii) air-to-ground surveillance, iv) command control and communications, v) combat effectiveness, vi) strategic air and sea lift, vii) air to air refueling and viii) deployable combat support and combat service support units. Furthermore, the PCC lays the ground for increased

pooling of funds and multinational efforts to a larger degree than the DCI (CRS Report 2007).

As the then NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence and Planning Operations Edgar Buckley so eloquently put it in a 2002 interview when speaking of the differences between the DCI and the PCC: “... *if everybody agrees to do everything that means nobody agrees to anything. This time around we know who’s agreed to do what, and we will monitor their implementation of their commitments*” (NATO Published Interview 2002). While the DCI was to compel all allies to fulfill all 58 requirements, the PCC specifies which member will do what from the very outset; thus avoiding the problem of disintegration of responsibility and the subsequent free riding that hindered the realization of the DCI. The PCC includes a system for keeping track of compliance through the commitment of all member states to report on their progress to the international staff at NATO HQ on a regular basis. The stronger and more comprehensive transatlantic commitment of the PCC is evidence of the initial politically unifying effect of the War on Terror.

4.1.3 Three Dimensions of Unity and Division

In sum, the period of 2001 - 2003 saw NATO rush into the historic inaugural invocation of Article 5 in an expression of the strongly unifying effect of 9/11 in regard to the political dimension, compared to before the War on Terror. This political unity was, however, in military terms expressed outside of NATO through OEF. As to the organizational dimension of the Alliance, the sidelining of NATO in Afghanistan was highly indicative of the NATO of 2001's lacking operational suitability and need for transformation in the eyes of the US. As a result NATO's Command Structure was completely rearranged to American preferences and the NRF was created in 2002. In 2001 the same dividing transatlantic dynamic was present in regard to the military dimension as it was with the organizational one. The forces the European allies could muster were to a large extent not suited to American needs. The circumstances were similar to the division caused by the transatlantic capabilities gap during the 1999 OAF campaign. The European resolve to mend these divisions were,

however, significantly greater in the period 2001 - 2003 than in 1999 - 2001. This is evident in comparing the level of commitment behind the DCI and the PCC.

As I shall explore in the next chapters, the political unity of the 2001 - 2003 period was to be severely challenged by the increasing demands of the ISAF operation. I also further investigate Afghanistan's impact on NATO's organizational dimension through the NRF, and the military dimension by the development of the PCC.

4.2 2003 - 2006 The Burden of Responsibility

The period of 2003 to 2006 saw the US War on Terror expand to include Iraq and NATO's role was greatly expanded in Afghanistan, both of which created significant transatlantic consequences. A clash of perceptions between the US and much of Europe was revealed by Iraq, and the new responsibilities placed upon the Alliance through ISAF expansion led to increased divisions within the Alliance.

4.2.1 Clashing Perceptions

By 2002 the US had started to move its focus to Iraq and was eager for Europe to bear more of the burden in Afghanistan where the main fighting was considered to be over and done with.

The subject of this thesis is transatlantic relations within NATO illuminated through the case of the Afghan War. However, the Afghan War is but one out of a manifold set of independent variables that have affected my chosen dependent variable over the course of the last nine years in which my analysis span. None so more profoundly than the 2003 invasion of Iraq which shook transatlantic relations across the board of institutions and issue areas including NATO. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan can not be treated in isolation from one and other as they interact and together formed the most pressing issues in international security relations for both NATO and the US.

From the American point of view in 2002 Afghanistan was merely the first move in the new paradigm of *War on Terror* and the invasion of Iraq and the toppling of

Saddam Hussein was the logical next step after Afghanistan. Vice President Cheney speaking to a crowd of veterans assured the listeners that:

The Taliban has already learned that lesson, but Afghanistan was only the beginning of a lengthy campaign. Were we to stop now, any sense of security we might have would be false and temporary

(Cheney Speech 2002)

The focus of the Vice Presidents speech was not, as one might have expected less that a year after the launch of OEF, on Afghanistan. The main emphasis of the speech was on building a normative argument based in the virtues of democracy and freedom towards war against Iraq. A normative position of spreading liberty by way of the gun, that is at the core of the neo-conservative ideology (Packer 2005:Chap.2). To once again quote the Vice President:

We would act in that same spirit after a regime change in Iraq. With our help, a liberated Iraq can be a great nation once again. Iraq is rich in natural resources and human talent, and has unlimited potential for a peaceful, prosperous future. Our goal would be an Iraq that has territorial integrity, a government that is democratic and pluralistic, a nation where the human rights of every ethnic and religious group are recognized and protected. In that troubled land all who seek justice, and dignity, and the chance to live their own lives, can know they have a friend and ally in the United States of America

(Cheney Speech 2002)

Observe that the Vice President is using the same normatively based argumentation when speaking of Afghanistan:

Today in Afghanistan, the world is seeing that America acts not to conquer but to liberate, and remains in friendship to help the people build a future of stability, self-determination, and peace

(Cheney Speech 2002)

President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address has since become remembered as the speech where the President listed the "axis of evil" made up by North Korea, Iran and Iraq. The War on Terror was not confined to Afghanistan. As President Bush (2002) unambiguously declared in the address: "*Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun*".

Understanding that Afghanistan and Iraq, to the US, both were part of the highly normative ideologically driven paradigm of the *War on Terror* is essential in examining NATO and Afghanistan. The reason this is essential is because this paradigm is not shared by the European allies, and this divergence in world view is one of the main sources of the emerging strain on the transatlantic relations within NATO after 2003. As explored in the previous sub-chapter, following the 9\11 attacks on the US the European leaders stood politically united with the US and ready to assist in what they perceived to be a just invasion of Taliban Afghanistan. To such an extent, even, that their commitment did not waver despite the fact that the US opted to circumvent NATO and command the operation unilaterally. In fact German Chancellor Schröder of the Social Democratic Party went as far as making the question of Germany contributing troops to OEF in the fall of 2001 a vote of confidence for his government in the Bundestag. The link between Al-Qaida and the Taliban was real and proven, and so was Europe's support for the Afghan engagement at the time. The link between 9\11, terrorism, Al-Qaeda and regime change in Iraq, however, was anything but clear to the western European Allies. This is the main reason why Iraq was a politically dividing issue while Afghanistan had a unifying effect. In Western European NATO capitals Afghanistan and Iraq were two completely separate issues. With the highly significant exception of the UK there was little to no support for war with Iraq to be found in Western Europe. Chancellor Schröder of Germany and President Chirac of France were particularly strong in their opposition.

Many when speaking or writing on the 2003 "crisis" in US - European relations tend to forget that *Europe* in NATO is not what it once was. Pond (2004:ix) for instance claims, with regards to NATO, that: "*relations in the transatlantic community ... were*

in greater crisis in 2003 than ever before". Gordon (2003:1) writes that: " ...*whether or not invade Iraq has provoked one of the worst transatlantic crisis ... of the entire post-World War II period*". What these claims fail to recognize is that transatlantic relations in NATO is no longer strictly the domain of Western Europe. One does well not forget what then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld coined to be the *New Europe*. When confronted with what was dubbed by journalists as *European* resistance towards war in Iraq Secretary Rumsfeld replied "*You're thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I don't. I think that's old Europe*" (Applebaum 2003). All three of NATO's newest members the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, supported and contributed troops to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), with Poland making a highly significant contribution of 2,500 troops on the ground. Of the eight future member countries that at the time took part in the Membership Action Plan (MAP), six, namely Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia, contributed and supported OIF, the two remaining being Slovenia and Croatia. The 2003 brawl over Iraq is in reality more precisely labeled as an inter-European issue with Atlantic dimensions, rather than simply a transatlantic divide. Nor was it a strict east-Europe versus west-Europe scenario in addition to Britain, Spain, Denmark and Italy also supported and contributed to the invasion of Iraq.

Putting the above mentioned exceptions aside, opposition to an invasion of Iraq was deep seated both in the elites and the peoples of Western Europe and as the US's efforts to mount transatlantic support for the endeavor proceed through 2002 what they achieved was the direct opposite – tensions grew rapidly and the transatlantic relationship was weakened. French and German opposition was exceptionally vocal and the French with their permanent seat excluded any possibility of the much sought after United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandate for the War. Even though the Bush-Administration had already made their decision they continuously through 2002 pushed for international support in the UNSC. This is because a UNSC mandate carries an overwhelming amount of legitimacy in the European audience, and would probably have gone a long way in muting European public opposition. Opinion polls from September 2002 reveal that as much as 60 percent of the European public backed

invasion given that it held UN approval and support of allies (Rupp 2006:124). The UNSC's role as the sole provider of legal grounds for international military force has made its mandate a *sine qua non* for military intervention in the post-modern Europe. That being said, even though a UN mandate goes a long way in remedying it, Western Europe carries an aversion towards the use of military force which is not found in the US. This can amply be illustrated by answers given in opinion polls revealing striking transatlantic differences in opinion towards war. The Western European NATO states are characterized by a post-modern attitude where military might is seen as something very alien and “of the past”, which almost by definition is wrong. While 74 percent of Americans answered *yes* to a question of whether: “war might be necessary in some cases”, the percent of Europeans answering positively to the same question was as low as 32 percent, and in key state Germany as low as 25 percent (Matlary 2009:152). The post-modern pacifism is most prominent in the former fascist states of Germany and Italy. As Matlary (2009:148) puts it “*Post-modern publics do not accept the characteristics of the military tool any longer*”.

The 9/11 attacks created a sense of imminent threat in the US legitimating the rhetoric of *Global War on Terror* and the in turn legitimizing war measures such as preemptive invasion of Iraq. The same can not be said of Europe. These fundamental transatlantic differences. *Firstly*, the differing understanding and conceptualization of the War on Terror, and *secondly*, the general perception of the legitimacy of military might and the role of the UNSC, contributed to increased transatlantic political division in the time frame of 2003 to 2006.

4.2.2 Disproportionate Burden-Sharing

On April 11th 2003 NATO accepted per request of the UNSC to take command over the ISAF mission⁷. In a historical perspective this is an unprecedented and highly unexpected turn in NATO history. In 2003 NATO's members accepted without

⁷ Twelve UNSC resolutions pertain to ISAF namely: 1386, 1413, 1444, 1510, 1563, 1623, 1707, 1776, 1817, 1833, 1890 and 1917 (of March 2010).

dissident or much debate a major military undertaking far outside of Europe. Granted that the challenges of stabilizing Afghanistan were greatly underestimated at the time, and the allies were not aware of the true nature of the issue facing them. In the words of the commander of ISAF in 2006 General Richards (2006:11): “*The North Atlantic Council agreed the plan for NATO expansion in Afghanistan on the assumption that the environment would become ... increasingly benign*”. Today we of course know the opposite was to be the case. Despite this, it is still a momentous turn in NATO history. No more than four years earlier the European allies had dismissed any notion that the Alliance’s new Strategic Concept of 1999 should mandate military action outside of Europe (Sloan 2010:36). “Out-of-area” at that time was outside of NATO, but still well within Europe.

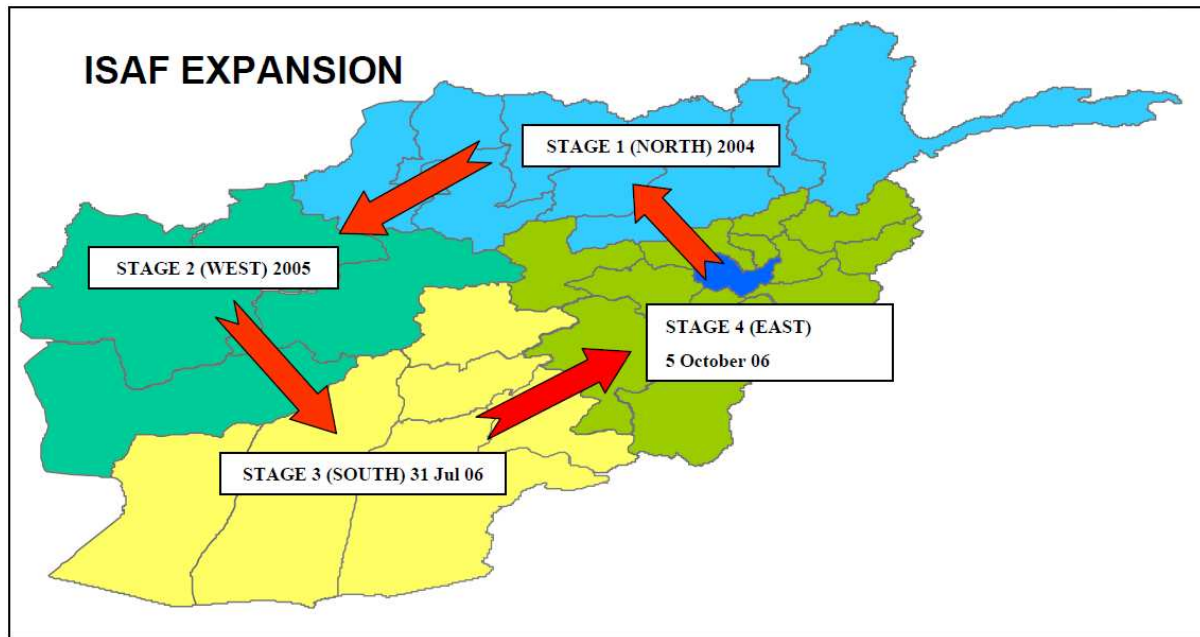
ISAF consists of troops from all the NATO allies and a great number of partner countries making the total number of contributing states forty-seven. States as diverse as Mongolia, Azerbaijan and Singapore take part in the coalition. Major non-member contributors are among others Australia, Sweden and Georgia. ISAF’s mission in Afghanistan is divided into five phases.

The first phase was i) *assessment and preparation* this phase was completed while the force was stationed in Kabul and under unilateral commands in 2001 to 2003. The next phase was ii) *geographical expansion* after which followed iii) *stabilization* which is the current phase⁸. Phase iv) is *transition* in which the ANA and ANP are to assume full security responsibilities, and finally there is phase v) *redeployment*. Since early 2009 NATO and US Officials have reportedly debated when to announce the start of the *transition* phase (CRS Report 2009a). This chapter analyzes the phase of expansion between 2003 and 2006.

As early as with the Bonn Agreement it was envisioned that ISAF would expand beyond Kabul. “*Such a force [ISAF] could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centers and other areas*” (Bonn Agreement 2001). ISAF expansion took place in four stages between 2003 and 2006.

⁸ At the 2010 Lisbon Summit it was decided that phase iv) would commence in the summer of 2011

Table 2: ISAF Expansion



(ISAF 2006)

Stage 1 of expansion started of by ISAF assuming control over the until then German led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kunduz in December 2003. This was a pilot project and four more new PRTs were soon to follow suit. The stage was completed by October the following year when all nine northern provinces of Afghanistan were under auspices of ISAF. Stage 2 started in February 2005 moved ISAF into the Western parts of the Country. The pashton dominated south has always been the Taliban's heartland. They originated from the southern Kandahar province, and the south is where they enjoy the highest degree of popular support. NATO and ISAF's expansion into the perilous south was delayed numerous times as violence was high in the region and NATO struggled to achieve the necessary pledges of troops from its members (CRS Report 2009a:5). This is indicative of the negative change in political unity that developed in the period of expansion, when compared to the time of 2001 - 2003. In July 2006 it was finally implemented. With Stage 3 the number of ISAF troops in the country doubled from 10 000 to 20 000 (NATO Topics: Afghanistan, 2010).

Since the very beginning of ISAF operations, and to this day, the Alliance members have placed national caveats upon the use of their national troops. Caveats are detailed

restrictions prescribing what a nation's soldiers can and cannot do, on the ground in Afghanistan. The exact number and many of the details surrounding ISAF caveats are classified information. The number and nature of the caveats change over time, however, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General James Jones has revealed that there was something in the order of fifty to eighty caveats restraining the priorities of NATO's command in Afghanistan in 2006. Examples of which are restrictions on not deploying troops to the more perilous south, not to operate at night and what weapons not to use (Auerswald & Saideman 2009:2). In addition to these written official caveats there exists a swarm of unwritten and sometimes unspoken national limitations. There is a constant dialogue between Afghanistan and the NATO-capitals, and decision makers on the ground consult their superiors in their home capitals when in doubt (Thruelsen 2007). This of course is bringing politics into military tactics in a way that profoundly breaks with the classic separation of civilian and political affairs that Huntington (1957) prescribes. ISAF is in effect being partially micromanaged from a number of separate European capitals. Furthermore, the ad hoc nature of the unwritten caveats seriously hinders the planning of operations on the ground. ISAF commanders are faced with uncertainty and sudden changes in regards to not only who can do what, but when they can do it, where they can do it, and even how they are to do it. These are no conditions for proper military planning.

As ISAF's mission expanded geographically between 2003 and 2006 the problem of national caveats became an increasingly pressing issue. As ISAF's area of responsibility grew geographically, so did the spectrum of operations required of the force. In 2005, preceding its final expansion and the move in to the perilous south, the ISAF Rules of Engagement (ROE) were modified and expanded. Despite this the ISAF ROE still remained fairly limited. Adding to the issue were the constraints imposed by the manifold and detailed national caveats placed upon troops. There exists a considerable amount of ill will in parts of the continental Europe towards committing troops to engage the Taliban and other anti government forces in head-on combat. As Kay and Khan (2007:170) writes on the 2005 modification: "*To expand*

the mission to include COIN combat operations was more than the consensus process in NATO could handle". There seems to have been an unspoken underlying premise in the transatlantic relationship within the alliance that only those that volunteer forces to the US led OEF were signing up for combat operations. Those who remained under NATO's command and ISAF were exempt from these high risk operations. However, since 2006 when ISAF's mandate was expanded to include the entire country ISAF has to an increasing degree taken on high-risk operations. But as ISAF slowly progressed into a COIN operation and the death tolls have risen, the caveats have become more and more of a dividing issue. Caveats are expressions of political division as they are manifestations of national interests trumping strategic priorities. The caveats minimize the risk of combat-death for the national contingent in question at the direct expense of the troops of other fellow allies. In Afghanistan British, Canadian and American forces account for 84 percent of the 1 078 combat-deaths between 2001 and 2009 (Sperling and Webber 2009:508) Caveats are in this sense an instrument of intra-alliance burden shifting.

The difficulties of stabilizing Afghanistan were, despite the country's history, grossly underestimated by both NATO and the US for many years. Much needed change of strategy did not emerge until 2009. The initial and continued separation of ISAF and OEF has been an impediment to NATO and the US achieving their aims in Afghanistan. The two forces operate under different mandates and with separate Rules of Engagement. This allowed those allies, like the British, who were willing to contribute combat troops to the more dangerous offensive operations of OEF to do so, but perhaps as importantly; it created an opportunity for the more reluctant European allies, like Germany, to limit their troops to the softer nation building force of ISAF. A contribution which proved far easier to sell to their home public than the more aggressive OEF. However, as the war has evolved the two forces have grown to look more and more alike. Only French and German steadfast reluctance in 2004 stopped a US proposal to merge the two operations under unified NATO command (Kay & Khan 2007). Some progress has been made in unifying command. While initially separate today the forces are under joint command as the head of ISAF and the head of

OEF is a double-hatted position, currently held by General Petraeus. For (at least) the three first years of NATO involvement leading up to 2006 much of NATO-Europe⁹ believed it could get through Afghanistan without getting their hands dirty or make any real sacrifices. ISAF was to play the “good cop”, and the US through OEF was to be the “bad cop”. As time and the mounting insurgency progressed, however, it became clear that unlike in the Balkans there was no peace to be “kept” in Afghanistan.

The exposure to the more dangerous regions of Afghanistan might have led to certain relaxations in the number and extent of national caveats as ISAF contributing nations realized that this was what was needed to meet the challenges now ahead (Richards 2006, Auerswald & Saideman 2009, CRS Report 2009b:16)). British General David Richards¹⁰ described the situation in the summer of 2006 as “*The last few months have witnessed milestones in the development of multinational coherence and unity of effort... ...the removal of customary restrictions by nations for recent operations, such as Operation Turtle... ...are all examples of how NATO is transforming on the job in Afghanistan.*” (Richards 2006:10). Operation Turtle was a combat maneuver conducted in the west of Afghanistan in 2006 in support of an OEF operation. It marks the change in the spectrum of ISAF operations that was taking place at the time and where to evolve much further as time progressed and the Afghan insurgency gained momentum. General Richards (2006:14) is once again very optimistic when he describes the operation as “*a microcosm of many of the aims of transformation and of new NATO emerging from the constraints of the old*”.

There are substantial grounds, however, for a more somber take on the development. In fact that when NATO was tasked with expanding ISAF to include the south in 2006 it was in fact not NATO, as *one*, that rose to the challenge. In fact only Australia (non-member), Canada, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Romania and the UK (in addition to the US) deployed troops to the south. That is eight of forty-seven

⁹Notable exceptions are: the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands

¹⁰Commander of ISAF from 2006 to 2007

contributing nations, and even more telling – only seven of the then twenty-six NATO allies. The majority of other allies do not even allow their troops to travel to Helmand of Kandahar. Thruelsen (2007:21) illustrates the point precisely by the hampered execution of Operation Medusa of September 2006. The operation was led by ISAF Regional Command South (RC-S) and to be conducted in the province of Kandahar. RC-S realized that they would be needing additional assistance from other regions in order to conduct the mission. Specifically Civilian Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) capabilities were requested. A request was sent to ISAF HQ for provision of the needed capabilities. However, the operation Medusa was forced to proceed without the requested capabilities. NATO HQ had identified and requested that a French CIMIC unit had joined the Operation Medusa in Kandahar. Paris, however, had placed its troops under strict orders not to engage in the south. The French soldiers were not allowed to leave the relative security of Kabul and Regional Command Center. This is but a single of a seemingly endless list of instances where caveats has stood between ISAF commanders and the operational flexibility the mission requires.

In addition to hindering the realization of NATO's cause in Afghanistan on the military level, the caveats also have a potent political dimension. Unfair and uneven sharing of risk is dividing the allies. The alternative explanation of the ISAF acronym heard among US soldiers “I Saw Americans Fight” speaks to the common perception of not all allies carrying their appropriate share of the burden. More than any other the German ISAF contribution has been the subject of much debate and criticism. German troops in Afghanistan were bound by very extensive caveats and in the first years they were hardly allowed to move outside of their camps at all (CRS Report 2009b:16). The PRT of Feyzabad in northern Afghanistan consisted of German, Danish and Czech troops. Although, the Danish contribution only accounted for 41 out of about 400 soldiers at the base, the Danish who opposed to the Germans are limited by few to no caveats, were having to do more than fifty percent of all patrolling (Thruelsen 2007:14). Such massive disproportionate burden sharing is bound to affect the relationship between even the best of allies. To once again utilize the case of the

Danish and the Germans as they perfectly serve to illustrate the differences. Denmark's troop contribution consists of about seven hundred troops who have been located in the southern Afghanistan region of Helmand since 2006. Germany is the third largest contributor of troops to ISAF with contributions varying between four to five thousand troops located mainly to Kabul and the Northern provinces. However, to this day Denmark has suffered thirty-eight deaths, while Germany has lost forty-seven of its citizens (including three policemen) in Afghanistan. Relative to the size of the respective countries population, and thus the size of their contributions, Denmark has undoubtedly carried the significantly heavier burden of the two. Calculated as fatalities per million inhabitants the figure for Denmark is 5,64 and for Germany its 0,51. If calculated by fatalities per troops deployed the numbers are 4,13 for Denmark, and 0.90 for Germany (Ringsmose 2010:334).

Caveats, especially the restrictions on traveling south, are the main impediments to achieving the operational flexibility that the American strategic and tactical documents earlier presented speak so highly of. The realization that the number of troops needed in Afghanistan had been severely underestimated for years, today has dawned upon NATO and the US. *“Since 2005, this mission [ISAF] moved to a counter insurgency focus, which was not adequately resourced until 2009”* (ISAF 2010a). As NATO information officer for Afghanistan Mr. Riggio puts it when he speaks of ISAF before 2009 *“There has been a mismatch between a very ambitious end state... and the amount of resources devoted to this end state”* (Hurriet Daily News 2010). The national caveats have undoubtedly contributed to this mismatch by effectively decreasing the number of troops that ISAF commanders can actually utilize where they are most needed.

As of 2010 there are twenty-seven PRT's in Afghanistan there presence presides NATO's involvement as they earliest ones were established already in 2001. Each PRT is under a national command and they differ greatly in the execution of their mandate. As with the caveats the PRTs suffer from national priorities trumping strategic concerns. The aim of the PRTs is to facilitate civilian-military cooperation and through this foster stability, development and governance in their region. The efforts of the

various PRTs are not coordinated at ISAF HQ or anywhere else for that matter. The Turkish PRT in Wardak, for instance, is led by a civilian and has a distinctly non-military profile while the Norwegian PRT in Meymaneh is a strictly military base. This is symptomatic of the disunity of efforts by NATO in Afghanistan. There is little or no formal exchange of experiences and separate efforts are left disjointed (Sloan 2010). The PRTs are cornerstones of the Comprehensive Approach combining security, development and governance through civil-military cooperation. The lack of ISAF-level coordination and a consistent strategy of managing these key pieces of the puzzle is therefore holding NATO back in Afghanistan.

4.2.3 Three Dimensions of Unity and Division

In sum, the expansion period between 2003 and 2006 was a time of increasing political division when compared to the preceding periods. The expansion of the War on Terror to include the invasion of Iraq wielded a strongly dividing effect upon the political dimension of the alliance as it revealed great transatlantic differences of understanding. Moreover, the ISAF expansion and the following increased combat activity made it apparent through, among other factors, the national caveats, that many of the European allies were letting national interest trump the common good. This is a sign of that the political unity found in 2001 - 2003 was significantly reduced. In the period 2003 - 2006 NATO's new Command Structure was brought into the American War on Terror through taking charge of ISAF. This is a significant development in regard to the organizational dimension, and a sign of lessening organizational transatlantic division. As to the military dimension, the allies were now, as opposed to the preceding period, engaged in common operations under NATO command. All twenty-six allies contributing to a multinational force such as ISAF wielded positive unifying effect on military unity and interoperability in the period. However, the politically imposed limitations and the disunity of command that marked NATO's engagement not only hindered immediate operational flexibility, but just as importantly it hampered the potential long term gains made in transatlantic interoperability and cooperation. These gains would likely have created a significant

unifying effect as to the military dimension. The national caveats were a dividing factor both in regard to the political and the military dimensions.

The Allies once again at the 2004 Istanbul re-committed to the transformation process started at the Prague Summit two years earlier. The Summit Statement reads “*the implementation of national Prague Capabilities Commitments (PCC) is progressing, and multinational activities – in strategic sealift and airlift, air-to-air refuelling*” (NATO 2004a). The efforts to improve the essential common air-lift capabilities taken at Istanbul came to fruition in July 2009. Three aircrafts with strategic air-lift capabilities, based in Hungary and multinational staffed, then became operational. These aircrafts were multilaterally acquired through NATO by ten allied and two partner countries. The capability has been utilized in supporting ISAF among other operations (NATO 2010d). This is a strong indicator of that, while political tensions over the lack of burden-sharing in ISAF rose throughout the period, important long-term steps were taken to bridge the transatlantic divide in regards to the military dimension. Then Secretary General Scheffer remarked “*At Istanbul, we ...moved our military transformation another major step forward*” (NATO 2004b).

The next sub-chapter examines further the transatlantic implications of NATO’s inability to halt the emerging insurgency.

4.3 2006 - 2009 Continuing Divisions

The worsening security situation in Afghanistan, and the demanding nature of fighting an insurgency was now beginning to severely wear on the Alliance. The negative politically and military dividing trends of the previously discussed expansion period continued, and were magnified as allied death tolls rose, and it became more and more apparent that ISAF was severely undermanned and lacked operational flexibility. On a positive note, some progress was made in terms of European capabilities development in the period.

4.3.1 An Emerging Insurgency

By the move in to the unstable and hostile south and the following combat engagements with the Taliban in 2006, the transatlantic dynamics within NATO changed in comparison to the earlier periods. The initial political unity created by the War on Terror was by this time severely weakened. As previously documented Germany contributed significant forces to OEF in 2001, including special operation forces. By 2006, however, the German forces in Afghanistan did not even share intelligence gathered by their Tornado reconnaissance planes under ISAF command with American forces wearing the OEF badge. In fear of that the intelligence would be used by the Americans in a way that was incompatible with the mandate given the Germany Military by its Government. This was a result of a decision by the Bundestag that such intelligence sharing would be in breach of the national limitations the parliament had placed upon the German Forces' operations in Afghanistan (Noetzel & Scheipers 2007). The operations were to be strictly confined to support and stabilization efforts. Despite the initial efforts to mend the transatlantic organizational and military capabilities division revealed at the start of the War on Terror, the US was shouldering the bulk of the burden, and the political division was now as prominent as the organizational and military division was in 2001.

Leading up to the 2006 NATO Summit meeting in Riga President Bush urged the Allies to shoulder a greater part of the burden in Afghanistan. The Bush White House's vision of NATO's role in its Global War on Terror had been further strained by the disproportionate effort in Afghanistan. NATO's future relevance from the American point of view was questioned. US Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland voiced the US concern over lacking European will and ability in 2006: *"If we can't do missions like that of Afghanistan, then we can't do our overall mission"* (quoted in Dale 2006:3). The Ambassador draws a direct connection between the future of Afghanistan and the future of NATO. The US came to Riga with an agenda of addressing the problem of and reducing ISAF caveats. The Summit Declaration in itself only reflects this indirectly, but the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's declaration on the Riga Summit reads: *"Forces deployed for NATO missions must have the flexibility to perform the range of operations demanded by a particular mission. All efforts should*

be made to reduce the use of national caveats which all too often restrict national contingents from participating in operations to their full capacity” (NATO 2006c).

At Riga the Allies decided to further strengthen their commitment to NATO transformation by agreeing on a Comprehensive Political Guidance. The Guidance is according to the Riga Summit Declaration (NATO 2006a) an agreement “*which provides a framework and political direction for NATO’s continuing transformation, setting out, for the next 10-15 years, the priorities for all Alliance capability issues, planning disciplines and intelligence.*” The influence of the War on Terror paradigm becomes apparent when the Guidance document states that “*Over the next 10 to 15 years, the evolving security environment and the need to deal with conventional and especially asymmetric threats and risks, wherever they arise, will put a premium on improvements in meeting ...capability requirements*” (NATO 2006b).

The RMA school of thought prescribing a “light footprint” in Afghanistan as to avoid being caught in the same swamp of nation building as the Soviets once were, was the prevailing wisdom for the first years of the conflict. Then US Deputy Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz said in November 2001: “*In fact, one of the lessons of Afghanistan’s history, which we’ve tried to apply in this campaign, is if you’re a foreigner, try not to go in. If you do go in, don’t stay too long...*” (quoted in Roberts 2009:29). By 2006 it had become abundantly clear that this strategy was a failure. The Taliban may have retreated, but they were not defeated. While the period from 2001 to 2004 was a relatively pacific period given the circumstances, there was a sharp incline in violence in 2005 that continues to this day. The Taliban and other anti-governmental forces, most notably the Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, used the time after the invasion to regroup and reorganize. This is in line with the classic guerrilla and insurgent tactics. As Mao thought his soldiers: “*The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue*” (Stewart 2006:40). Asymmetrical tactics such as roadside IEDs and suicide bombings were introduced, likely adopted from the Iraqi insurgency. NATO and ISAF were now fighting a potent insurgent force hiding among the general population. This is far removed from the initial mandate and origin of what was supposed to be a

security assistance force. European perceptions of NATO's role in Afghanistan needed to be severely adjusted (Korski 2008). The initial expectations preeminent among the European populations and elites of that ISAF would resemble the peacekeeping of KFOR more than OEF, meant that the European allies were ill prepared for handling loss of allied lives and the involvement in heavy combat in Afghanistan. The deteriorating security development in Afghanistan affected the transatlantic relationship negatively as it further revealed the transatlantic gap in the understanding of the role of military might in fighting terrorism. This gap had been present from the start, but brought to the surface by the disproportionate burden-sharing as ISAF faced combat in southern Afghanistan.

The initial “light footprint” model was abandoned in favor of the Comprehensive Approach. The Comprehensive Approach underlines the importance of civil-military cooperation and coordination. Security, development and governance are three equal parts of a whole, none of which can be neglected if stability is to be achieved. This meant that NATO's strategy became more dependent on cooperation with the other international actors working in Afghanistan such as the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and NGOs, as well as the Afghan government on both national and local levels. Out of the trinity of the Comprehensive Approach NATO only specializes in security, and even the security situation did not develop according to plan. Insurgent activity increased steeply from 2007 to 2008 rising from an average of 12,4 to 18,4 attacks per day (Roggio & Radin 2008).

Insurgency can be defined as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group uses political means *and* violence to undermine or destroy the ruling group's legitimacy, with the ultimate aim of resuming rule. It is important to note that an insurgency always has a political side. In Afghanistan this is manifested by the Taliban's “night letters” of intimidation, and the establishment of local governments and courts that adhere to the Taliban and not the official government's rule. The enormous discrepancy between the international forces and the Taliban causes the latter to apply asymmetrical tactics such as IED's and suicide-bombings. The insurgent forces through these asymmetrical means translate

their tactical inferiority into strategic superiority. These tactics relate to terrorism in the sense that the ultimate targets of, for instance, the IED's is not simply the soldiers directly killed or wounded. As important is the audience watching at home in the US and Europe. This is amply illustrated by Taliban spokesman Zaibullah Mujahid's comments on Norwegian television news the day after a Norwegian officer was killed in a suicide-bombing: *"These are your children, do not let them die for American interests. Pull your forces out of Afghanistan"* (TV2 News April 17th 2009). In a Clausewitzian manner the insurgents attack the political will of the opponent, which constitutes the strategic center of gravity for the Alliance. A consensus based multilateral organization such as NATO is likely more vulnerable to such asymmetrical propaganda based tactics than states acting unilaterally. Formal alliances like NATO are, on the other hand, better suited than volatile collations of the willing. As most of the European allies' contributions are so small that their pulling out of the conflict would have little or no direct influence on ISAF's ability to win military in Afghanistan¹¹, danger of allies acting as free riders is a real issue of concern. If for instance Belgium was to pull out their roughly 500 men and women the military implications on the ground would be minimal or non-existing. The political ramifications of allies pulling out, however, are substantial. A chain reaction of European allies pulling out is something both the US and NATO is rightly worried about. The absence of Afghanistan as a free harbor of international terrorism is a non-discriminate good. If the US does achieve this aim, its allies in Europe benefit greatly from it regardless of whether they contributed to its fulfillment or not. However, despite this all European NATO allies, and more than fifteen other states, have contributed to ISAF and many of them to the OEF before that. This is in part due to the genuine transatlantic solidarity created by the massive acts of Terrorism on 9/11, but foremostly the European interest in keeping a strong NATO as an institutional framework limiting the US. These dynamics have moderated the politically dividing impact of the Afghan experience. Even though the Dutch have all but pulled out and

¹¹ 13 of the 28 allied contingents to ISAF were as of October 2010 composed of less than 400 troops (ISAF 2010)

the Canadians are planning to follow them, we have not yet witnessed the feared domino effect. For the US the importance of these minor military contributions lie with in the added legitimacy of multilateralism to the Afghan War, which politically speaking is significant. That said, greater European military contributions is still very much sought after by the the US.

Furthermore the US, like Europe, has an interest in a relevant and strong NATO. For the US the Alliance serves as an extended arm of influence into European security politics. These mutually beneficial factors strongly moderate the long-term implications of the division generated by the disproportionate burden-sharing in Afghanistan.

The most basic principles of countering an insurgency is summed up in the three small words: *clear - hold - build*. That is; *clear* the area of identifiable enemies, stay there and *hold* the ground so the enemy does not immediately return to prominence, and *build* tangible progress and development as to ensure the support of the locals. Winning the support of the local villagers is at the heart of all COIN operations. Local support through supplies and shelter are as important to insurgents as water is to fish. The single most important element of winning local support for ISAF is avoiding collateral damage. In other words stopping the accidental killing of non-combatants. COIN doctrine thus requires less emphasis on force protection and especially the use of close air support. Furthermore, COIN requires much higher troop numbers as holding ground is a central part of the strategy. Those higher troop numbers were, however, not to appear until Obama's surge in late 2009.

In the time from NATO adopting its countrywide mandate in Afghanistan leading up to 2009, both OEF and ISAF were under-manned and relied heavily on Air Power. As Roberts (2009:49) puts it "*In military terms, a light footprint on the ground inevitably means a heavy air presence*". In 2006 116 Afghans non-combatants were killed in ISAF bombings. In 2007 the number was close to three times higher at 321 dead non-combatants after air strikes. In 2008 the number was somewhat reduced to at least 152 killed. Thirty-three of which were in a single air strike by the US in the 22nd of

August (Roberts 2009:41-41). As the former (2003 - 2005) Afghan Minister of the Interior Mr. Ali A. Jalali wrote in *Parameters* (2007:15): “NATO... sees itself responsible for the military action in counterinsurgency efforts, but often only when and where it can utilize firepower as a substitute for its limited number of forces”. ISAF's continuously low troop levels had become a serious impediment to achieving its mission objective. This realization of ISAF inadequacy slowly dawned on both Washington and Brussels. However, with President Obama taking office in January 2009, as is embellished upon in the next chapter, it became evident that the response would come in form of an Americanization of the War and not a greater emphasis on a united NATO effort. This is a sign of the heightened political division created by the lack of adequate burden-sharing.

In the period 2006 - 2008 the insurgency was still very much located to the south. In fact the insurgent activities were highly concentrated on a quite small geographical area. According to a UN (2008:5) report 70 percent of all insurgent incidents reported occurred in 10 percent (40) of Afghanistan's districts, home to a mere 6 percent of the total population. As the great majority of COIN operations in the period 2006 to 2008 took place in the south where American and British troops are dominant, the caveats prohibiting the majority of the allies from traveling south became even more of a military and politically dividing issue. Out of the then 35 000 ISAF troops 11 000 non-American troops were located to Regional Command South almost half (5 200) of which were British. The same UN report also concluded that the insurgency was now spreading, in particular to the far north-west and the provinces bordering Kabul (UN 2008:5).

Afghanistan was at this point beginning to seriously wear and tear on the commitment of several NATO allies, and none more so than the ones engaged in the south. In January 2008 in a meeting with President Bush Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper faced the president with an ultimatum. The prime minister made it clear that unless other allies came to Canada's immediate assistance in Kandahar province, the Canadian participation would not be extended beyond 2009 (Fox News 2008). Approaching a 2008 Defence Ministers meeting in Vilnius Canadian Defence

Minister Mackay told the press that “*We want to see more of a one-for-all approach, including more burden-sharing in the south*”, and in undiplomatic terms added “*That’s non-negotiable*” referring to the Canadian troop request (Reuters 2008). Canada had at this point suffered 78 deaths in their efforts to quench the insurgents in the southern province, and the conservative Canadian government of the time was experiencing rising domestic public opinion against the war. The Canadian demand and their steadfastness led to the US being forced to committing an additional 3 200 marines to Kandahar on a short term deployment to appease their neighbor to the north (Orr 2009). On the other side of the Atlantic the Dutch were also starting rumblings of pulling out of the southern Uruzgan province¹². None of the European allies were willing to lift the caveats restraining them to the north of the country. A clear indicator of that the degree of political unity required to subdue individual national interests in pursuit of the common alliance good, was not present.

Before the Villinus meeting Secretary Gates sent written letters to all the allied Defence Ministers calling on them to contribute troops to the south. After the meeting, he revealed to the press that he had failed to receive any replies. Witnessing Europe’s unwillingness to take on more of the burden in Afghanistan the Secretary commented that: “*I think that it puts a cloud over the future of the alliance if this is to endure and perhaps even get worse*”. Only the Canadians, Britons, Dutch, Australian and Danes, are “*really out there on the line and fighting*” he further remarked (The Guardian 2008). The signs of increasing political division became apparent as Secretary General Scheffer told reporters he rather see Gates making these requests in private (The Guardian 2008).

The 2008 Strategic Vision for ISAF makes clear references to inadequate burden-sharing. The US was at this time engaged in persistent efforts of drawing the European allies into more dangerous operations in the south (Sperling and Webber 2009:502). The Strategic Vision Document states that the Allies need to “*support each other in*

¹² The Dutch talk of exit was, however, also mitigated for the time and their stay extended by two years (The Australian 2007).

sharing the burden”, “*filling remaining ISAF shortfalls*” and “*provide maximum possible flexibility for use of our forces by the ISAF commander*” (ISAF 2008). At the 2008 NAC meeting in Brussels the allied foreign ministers underlined that “*We remain determined to provide ISAF with the forces, resources, and flexibility to ensure the mission’s success*” (NATO 2008). The divisions created by the European caveats preventing the operational flexibility sought after by the US, was now becoming apparent even at the top political level of the Alliance.

This in spite strong pleads from US secretary Gates leading up to the Villinus meeting for more of the European allies to travel south. The Secretary famously warned of “*a two-tier alliance in which you have some allies willing to fight and die... and other who are not*” (Reuters 2008). He received strong backing from both Britain and the Netherlands with the Dutch Defence Minister Middelkoop commenting “*We all have to realize... that we have to do the job in a proper way*” on his American colleagues remark (Reuters 2008). The German Minister on the other hand stated that “*I think we are doing our bit fully in Afghanistan*” (Reuters 2008). Neither the German nor the French yielded to the pressure of committing troops to the south. By January the Dutch government collapsed over the question to once again renew the troop commitment to Afghanistan and announced that the troops were leaving by the end of the year (NY Times 2010). From February to October 2010 the Dutch contribution was reduced from 1885 to a mere 380 troops (ISAF 2010a & ISAF 2010b).

These developments are indicative of how the transatlantic political unity created within NATO in 2001 and sustained to about 2005 now was to a large extent eroded by the Afghanistan experience. This political division spills over in to the Military dimensions by hampering some of the practical war-time integration and interoperability developments that would have been greater if all the allies worked together where they were the most needed. An extent of the potential military unity afforded by ISAF thus suffers from the higher degree of political division in this period.

The picture that faced the newly elected President Obama in 2009 was that the cracks in the European commitment to the cause of Afghanistan were becoming more and more apparent.

4.3.2 The NRF and the PCC – Slowly Progressing

At the 2006 Riga Summit the NRF was declared ready and at Full Operational Capacity (FOC). The Summit declaration reads “*The establishment of the NATO Response Force (NRF) which today is at full operational capability has been a key development. It plays a vital part in the Alliance’s response to a rapidly emerging crisis. It also serves as a catalyst for transformation and interoperability and will enhance the overall quality of our armed forces...*” (NATO 2006). The announcement of FOC at Riga was, however, a desperate effort mainly to avoid embarrassment and is described among NATO officials as “completely fictitious” (Ringsmose 2010:293). The force was in reality still under-manned. While it may not have been truly at FOC in 2006 the NRF certainly had made some considerable headway from 2002 to 2006.

By 2006 the NRF had undertaken training missions where it combined both air, sea and land units, and conducted demanding tasks such as precision fighter bombing, special forces assaults and naval bombardment (Kugler 2007:10). This indicates that while the lack of burden sharing in Afghanistan wielded a dividing effect on the political level, Europe was actually making substantial progress in bridging the transatlantic capabilities gap. The organizational and military divide, that had been evident in the time following 2001, had been lessened. Then Secretary General Scheffer expressed the positive sentiment of NATO adapting to the demands of the War on Terror in a speech following the above mentioned exercise: “*You see here the new NATO, a NATO which has the possibility to be expeditionary, to project stability. The NRF is the most important tool to show in which way and how NATO has transformed and is transforming*” (quoted in Kugler 2007).

By 2006 there were, however, still significant shortcomings on the European side especially in terms of expeditionary capabilities and communications technology

which is vital to transatlantic interoperability. Still Kugler (2007:17) describes the situation of the NRF in 2006 as “*product of successful NATO innovation that began in 2002, accelerated during 2003 – 2006, and continues today. Future success will depend upon how much effort NATO, the Europeans, and the United States invest in bringing this force to full capability and life*”.

4.3.3 Three Dimensions of Unity and Division

In the period of accelerating insurgency resistance from 2006 - 2009, as in the preceding period (2003- 2006), national interests were to a large extent put before NATO interests in Afghanistan. American and other allies’ pleas for more allies to contribute, in the south, where the real fighting was taking place, fell on deaf ears. Most of the European allies were still not willing to share in that risk. European expectations of a benign development, stemming from the time before ISAF’s expansion to the south, were greatly miss-matched with the raising death tolls and the demanding COIN operations. Throughout the period these factors further intensified the effects of political division that started in 2005, when the NAC began experiencing divisions over ISAF’s ROE, and the new and far more offensive nature of the *Security Assistance* force.

As to the organizational dimension in 2006 – 2009, the NRF progressed in a somewhat flawed manner often not reaching its troop requirements (Ringsmose 2009). This is to a large degree a consequence of the ISAF mission draining much of the European capabilities that otherwise could have been directed at fulfilling NRF contingents. ISAF has completely dominated the NATO agenda for seven years, and the NRF has come second at best. In this manner ISAF distracted from and hampered the development of the NRF, and thus wielded a dividing organizational effect. In is to a significant extent the impact of Afghanistan that has led to that the force, which General James Jones deemed to be one of the most important organizational developments of NATO, to be less of a success.

As for the military dimension, on the other hand, the NRF did in the time from 2006 - 2010 prove its utility in being a potential catalyst of national capabilities development. Although significant European shortcoming remained, the development was heading in the right direction. In this sense the paradigm of War on Terror brought a unifying effect to the military dimension of the period.

4.4 2009 - 2010 Americanization – Obama’s War

President Obama took office in January 2009 after a campaign where he vowed to make Afghanistan the number one priority for US Foreign and Security policy. From taking office to October 2010 he has almost quadrupled the US’s troop contingent to ISAF from 23 000 to 90 000 (ISAF 2009; ISAF 2010b). Afghanistan has become “Obama’s War”, and the legacy of his first term will unavoidably be closely linked with the War. Part of that legacy will be the Americanization of ISAF. The European influence in ISAF has in 2009 - 2010 progressively diminished. This is to a large extent a consequence of the transatlantic political division that has been building since NATO entered southern Afghanistan in 2006.

4.4.1 Americanization of ISAF

The COIN strategy of NATO came into full fruition with the creation of ISAF Commander General McChrystal's Counterinsurgency Guidance document launched in August 2009. McChrystal with this introduced the concept of zero tolerance for civilian casualties. The former ISAF Commander McKiernan was succeeded by McChrystal in the wake of just such a substantial accidental civilian killing by ISAF forces on May 4th 2009 (The Guardian 2009b). The very rare mid-flight change of top command in May 2009 marks a watershed in the international military engagement in Afghanistan, and signifies the changes introduced by the Obama White House. Secretary of Defence Gates was quoted as saying he seeks “*fresh thinking and fresh eyes*” on Afghanistan and that “*We have a new strategy, a new mission, and a new ambassador. I believe that new military leadership is also needed*” (Washington Post 2009). Anonymous Pentagon officials are reported to have stated that McKiernan was

partly fired for being too traditional in his thinking and not embracing the emerging new COIN doctrine that was quickly gaining popularity in Washington, and that he had been too easy on reluctant European allies (The Guardian 2009a). The aforementioned COIN Guidance document breaks with traditional military responses to asymmetrical conflict as *“a bull that repeatedly charges a matador's cape – only to tire and eventually be defeated by a much weaker opponent”* and goes on to state that *“We need to think and act very different to be successful”* (ISAF 2009). The firing of McKiernan and the introduction of the COIN campaign under McChrystal thus signifies the Americanization of the Afghan engagement.

The new strategy makes it clear that the measure of success no longer is the number of Taliban or Al-Qaeda killed. NATO and ISAF are in Afghanistan engaged in a struggle for the support of the average Afghan man or woman. *“Essentially, we and the insurgents are presenting an argument for the future of Afghanistan: they will decide which argument is the most attractive, most convincing, and has the greatest chance of success”* (ISAF 2009). The war is to be won by denying the subversive influence of the insurgents who seek to undermine the government and alternately harass and cajole the local public to join in their cause. Protecting the people is now the mission and the indirect measure of success. *“The conflict will succeed by persuading the population, not by destroying the enemy”* (ISAF 2009). Shifting the balance in the public in the way that this COIN strategy outlines is a tremendously costly undertaking. Both in terms of money, but even more sincerely – in lives. The strategy requires higher troop numbers and far greater risk taken by the Western troops than classical military doctrine does.

Another aspect of the development that drives the increasing American dominance is the more and more central role played by Pakistan. Pakistan has since the start of the insurgency served as a sanctuary for the opposing forces where they rest and resupply. Under Obama drone-attacks on Pakistani territory has increased, and the regional aspect of the conflict seems to have gained attention (CRS Report 2009b:32). A key aspect of Obama's Afghanistan strategy has been a more coherent US Policy on Pakistan (CRS Report 2009a). This development makes the bilateral connections

between the US and Pakistan ever more central, and thus contributes to further Americanization on NATO's expense.

The new COIN Strategy is an American Strategy. It was conceived, developed and implemented by and through Washington and the Pentagon, and not the NAC. With the surge of 90 000 American troops, Washington's domination over Brussels in the matters of Afghanistan has increased. Neither in the firings of General McKiernan nor McChrystal, as commanders of the NATO force ISAF, was the NAC involved. This is highly indicative of a transatlantic political divide and Americanization of the war where Washington no longer bothers to root its ISAF policies in the NAC. While the firing of General McChrystal was highly unexpected, the ramifications in terms of policy changes are likely to be miniscule as General Petraeus was one of the most central behind-the-scenes figures in McChrystal's COIN campaign and his superior at the time of its creation. The continuation of the COIN campaign affects upon the transatlantic dynamics of burden-sharing as well the implications of the political Americanization.

The American surge in 2009 and the development of ISAF into a full-fledge COIN operation has affected the transatlantic burden-sharing relationship in two ways. *Firstly*, the vast majority of these additional soldiers have been American. Thus, the transatlantic balance of troop contributions has shifted. Between December 2008 and February 2010 the ISAF troop count doubled from roughly 50 000 to 100 000 soldiers, however, 42 000 of the 50 000 man increase came from the US alone (ISAF 2008, ISAF 2010). By 2010 the US delivered 60 percent of all ISAF troops. The balance shifted from The US is now bearing an even greater share of the burden in terms of numbers.

Secondly, COIN requires significantly greater risks on behalf of the ISAF troops. As COIN doctrine demands less reliance on air support and increased contact with the population making the troops vulnerable for attack. This raises the human cost of contributing troops. Since the formation of the Afghan insurgency began in 2005 the death toll for NATO troops have increased steadily. In 2004 the international forces

(OEF and ISAF) sustained 60 combat-fatalities. By 2005 the number more than doubled to 131, after 2009 troop increase the number reached 521, and by November 2010 the number was 655 deaths (icasaulties.org 2010).

These two factors combined – the balance of troop contributions is shifted towards the US in terms of numbers, and the human cost of every contribution is increased – indicate heightened transatlantic political and military division. NATO is looking more and more like the Alliance Secretary Gates warned of when he spoke of a two-tiered Alliance where some are willing to fight and die and other are not.

Leading up to the December 2009 force generation conference for ISAF at NATO HQ, the Obama Administration publicly voiced that it would seek an expanded European contribution to ISAF. The number that was circulated was an additional 10 000 troops (NY Times 2009). By mid 2010 the non-American ISAF troop numbers had actually risen, but only by roughly 5 000, including significantly increased contributions from Turkey, Poland and Italy (ISAF 2010). Major allies Germany and France made it clear that the unpopular public standing of the War in their home publics made further contributions out of the question (NY Times 2009). Obama, in other words, got half of what he asked for. Furthermore, the additional European troops were still bound by the plentiful national caveats hampering their effective utilization, which in effect makes the contribution less than the sum of its parts.

With a new President in the White House, significant changes was also introduced to the paradigm of War on Terror. Firstly, the very contents of the concept changed. Obama's NSS of 2010 is much more oriented towards the Far East, as in India and China, than its predecessor the Bush NSS of 2006. The break with the Bush paradigm of War on Terror is completely explicit. As the earlier quoted the 2002 NSS blatantly states:

The United States of America is fighting a war against terrorists of global reach. The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism—premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents.

Bush's second NSS in 2006 goes on to, in no uncertain terms, underline the War on Terror:

America is at war. This is a wartime national security strategy required by the grave challenge we face – the rise of terrorism fueled by an aggressive ideology of hatred and murder, fully revealed to the American people on September 11, 2000.

The 2010 NSS on the other hand reads:

The United States is waging a global campaign against al-Qa'ida and its terrorist affiliates. ...We will always seek to delegitimize the use of terrorism and to isolate those who carry it out. Yet this is not a global war against a tactic—terrorism or a religion—Islam. We are at war with a specific network, al-Qa'ida, and its terrorist affiliates who support efforts to attack the United States, our allies, and partners.

The former “War on Terror” is now consistently referred to as a “campaign against terror”. The change in rhetoric is major and it is interesting to note how the NSS of 2010 almost goes out of its way to explicitly contradict its predecessor. Obama's rhetoric is much closer to the one preferred in Europe, which in itself signifies a transatlantic politically unifying effect. The hard facts on the ground in Afghanistan, however, speak to the contrary. The continuity from War on Terror paradigm implemented on Iraq is highly evident in Obama's Afghanistan. Although Obama does not use the term “Surge”, probably to avoid comparison with his former, that is exactly the policy he has implemented in Afghanistan since taking office. The transition plan (ISAF phase five) that was adopted at the November 2010 Lisbon Summit follows closely the transition plan of Iraq that was previously implemented. All the Allies share an interest of leaving Afghanistan as soon as possible. However, the continued disproportionate burden-sharing and Americanization of the War since 2009 point to that the Obama move in rhetoric towards Europe has produced very limited political unity within NATO.

Furthermore, the standing of Terrorism as the perceived supreme threat to international security is fading. Thus the importance of the paradigm of War on Terror in guiding US policy is shifting as well. It can be argued, that the major Wars of the 20th century were brought on by states that were too powerful like the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Since the end of the Cold War, and in particularly since 2001, the prevailing wisdom has been that now it is the other way around. The major threats to the US, and other Western states, have been perceived to stem from failing states. States that are unwilling or unable to keep control over their territories and thus become safe harbors for terrorists. In other words states that are too weak. In the last few years we have begun to see the emerging reversal of the Terrorism as the supreme threat. The growing economic powers of countries like Russia, India and China have moved the focus of the US back to more traditional threats. The, so far, culmination of this development is the Russian – Georgian war of late summer 2008. This development has also hit NATO through its current work on a new Strategic Concept. The Albright et al. (2010) report from the Group of Experts designated to advise on the coming Strategic Concept signifies a move away from Terrorism as the defining threat for NATO in the 21st century. For the prospects of NATO's political unity this is likely a positive development. For the Eastern European members such as the Baltic states, the desire to move the focus from Afghanistan and international terrorism, to NATO-partner-country Russia has been paramount following the Russian - Georgian conflict.

Furthermore, Afghanistan and the ISAF mission have played a significant role in lessening the transatlantic capabilities gap that has been a transatlantic issue since NATO's conception and in particularly after the Cold War (ACT 2009). The dividing influence in this military transatlantic imbalance has varied with other circumstances. The conflicts in the Balkans in the nineties, and Afghanistan since 2003 has brought the issue to the top of the NATO agenda. More, however, than their military ability it has been the European allies lacking political will to fight that has put a political and military strain on NATO in Afghanistan.

These developments are likely to lessen the long term damage of the political division created over the last years by the Afghan War as NATO retracts to what is often

labeled its more traditional Article 5 oriented nature. The terrain gained in European capabilities development and NATO's organizational transformation over the last seven years remains vital to NATO, and will very likely signify a long term politically unifying effect. As the Albright et al. (2010:8) report states "*NATO's core commitment – embodied in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty – is unchanged, but the requirements for fulfilling that commitment has shifted in shape*". The often drawn distinction between an "Article 5 focused" Alliance, and an "out-of-area" focused Alliance is in regard to the organizational and military dimensions a false dichotomy. Both require modern and expeditionary forces with airlift capabilities at hand. And most importantly: both require transatlantic interoperability. To again quote the Albright et al. (2010:19) report:

NATO planners must recognize that the potential sources of Article 5 threats have broadened and now include dangers that could arise either inside or outside the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO must be prepared to defend against (and deter) such threats regardless of their point of origin.

4.4.2 The NRF and the PCC – Achieving Transformation

Much justified criticism had been leveled against the NRF: it has been chronically under manned with an average troop fill rate of 69 percent and has been scaled down at several occasions. (Ringsmose 2009). Furthermore it has suffered from strongly diverging views on its application and to this date it has only been used in real-life-operations twice. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and after the 2008 Pakistani earthquake (Kugler 2007). However, in regards to the NRF's aim of driving European military transformation it has by 2009 been relatively successful.

In January 2009 the ACT conducted an evaluation of the NRF's role in NATO transformation as part of a report delivered to the International Military Staff in Brussels. The report named "NATO Responses Force: Transformational Benefits" sets the fulfillment of the PCC requirements as its criteria for assessing the transformational success of the NRF. It states that several nations, mentioned by name

are Poland, Denmark and The Netherlands have “*drastically altered the focus and capabilities of their forces*”. The ACT report further observes that “*significant progress in policy and funding, capability development and military interoperability*” has been made, and concludes that “*...it is clear that meaningful and important transformational benefits generated through the NRF have been realized*”. The NRF has been an important factor in driving European military transformation including creating both expeditionary capabilities and an emerging expeditionary mind-set in European NATO capitals. The NRF is ascribed the central role in the realization of the PCC, a process which is regarded as rather successful (NATO ACT 2009, Ringsmose 2009:292). The report points to that European governments have made explicit reference to their NRF commitments when justifying their defence priorities vis-à-vis their home parliaments. The report also states that “*...nations are no longer maintaining forces designed exclusively for territorial defence, they have committed themselves to building and maintaining strong forces also capable of conducting expeditionary operations*”.

The report underlines the importance of the NRF’s rotational nature in facilitating transformation. The NRF consists, at all times, of a multinational force on six months stand-by with a readiness to deploy worldwide within five days. Before becoming operational every NRF rotation trains together for six months as to ensure interoperability and national adaption to NATO doctrine. Every six month rotation on stand-by is also followed by a six moth stand-down period. This rotational structure has served to enhance transformation and capabilities development by allowing all NATO members to access to the benefits of participating in the NRF, and subsequently bringing the new gained knowledge and experience back home when reintegrated in their national militaries. By this, both the newer and the smaller Alliance members have gained unique experience in multinational expeditionary operations. Through this a broadening in the pool of nations able to contribute to current and future NATO missions has taken place. Furthermore, another important dimension is the formal and informal socialization into an expeditionary mind-set and

the NATO latest NATO approved doctrine that a contribution to a NRF rotation entails.

The majority of the military capabilities at NATO's disposal are in fact national capabilities provided by the member states. There has, however, also been a strengthening of the commonly funded NATO capabilities. Since the beginning of the War on Terror NATO has approved its collective logistics capacities by moving previous national responsibilities to the collective level, thus increasing multinational jointness and unity of command within logistics through the Joint Logistics Support Group for the NRF. At the national level there is the example of Slovenia, which contributed a platoon within a multinational Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion (CBRN DefBn) that was part of the fourth NRF in 2004. Capitalizing on this experience Slovenia expanded their capacities within CBRN-defence and by NRF 10 their contribution had grown from a platoon to a company, and by 2009 into a full-fledged CBRN DefBn of their own (NATO ACT 2009:11).

There is little doubt that the War on Terror, with its emphasis on expeditionary deployable forces, as the guiding paradigm of American security policy and the alliance cohesion created by the 9/11 attacks and the following sidelining of NATO in Afghanistan is the source of these developments. As the ACT Report (p.7) clearly states “... *the real impetus for change came with the 9/11 attacks against the United States of America*”.

It seems evident that the growing political division within the Alliance, on account of the negative developments of Afghanistan as the War has progressed especially since 2005, has not hindered the allies in moving towards unity in regards to interoperability within the military dimension.

4.4.3 Three Dimensions of Unity and Division

Afghanistan has in the time 2009 to 2010, like the preceding two periods, increasingly divided the allies politically, despite a convergence in transatlantic rhetoric. The main reason for this continued negative development is the European aversion towards

accepting the risk-sharing that the COIN operations increasingly demand. The ISAF operations has become highly Americanized, not only in terms of the number of troops on the ground in Afghanistan, but also in regard to Washington, at the expense of Brussels, to a higher extent taking charge of the Force.

As for the military dimension, the 2009 ACT Report reveals that the American War on Terror paradigm that initiated the launch of the transformation efforts, over the longer term since 2001, when compared to the nineties, has wielded a substantial militarily unifying effect on the Alliance. The impact on the military dimension has thus moved from initial division, to a higher degree of unity. While the development for the political dimension has moved the Alliance from initial strong unity, to increased divisions. Once more this makes evident the added value of avoiding a monolithic analytical concept of NATO. The PCC has managed to propel European capabilities transformation in a manner the DCI did not. This is largely thanks to the organizational development of the NRF. The NRF does suffer from the political divisions created by Afghanistan, and ISAF as a competing consumer of resources. It has – at best – been a limited failure as a whole. However, as an organizational catalyst for capabilities transformation the NRF has been relatively successful. Driving transformation was always a central part of the rationale behind the NRF, and in this regard the paradigm of War on Terror has wielded an organisationally partly unifying effect on the alliance. I say partly, however, because the ISAF and war in Afghanistan at the same time has wielded a counter working dividing organizational effect, through sapping potential resources and devotion from the Response Force.

In the next, and final, chapter I present the key empirical outcomes from the entire period (2001 - 2010) and discuss the theoretical implications.

5 Conclusions

The question under scrutiny for this thesis was the nature and extent of the mark left on the transatlantic relations of NATO after nine years of the War on Terror paradigm, and seven years fighting on the ground in Afghanistan. In order to illuminate the Afghan War's impact on NATO, I have utilized the analytical concepts of *unity* and *division*. The yardstick that has been applied in the analysis has been the degree of European adaption to American led initiatives of transformation, in the period of interest. To begin with I asked; to what extent has NATO's Afghan engagement, so far, served to be a source of greater transatlantic unity, or a source of division, within the Alliance?

The short answer to this is: the Afghanistan engagement has been a source of limited political division, and substantial improvements in organizational and military unity.

I shall in the following first present a concentrated review of the most prominent empirical conclusions of the analysis. Thereafter I proceed to frame the conclusions in a grander theoretical context. Finally, I present some concluding remarks and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Key Empirical Outcomes

To avoid a one-dimensional understanding of NATO that might obscure as much as it enlightens I divided the analysis in accordance with three analytical dimensions, namely the *Political*, *Organizational* and *Military*. This allows for the analysis to differentiate, recognize and incorporate forces working in opposing directions within NATO. A monolithic analytical concept of NATO that does not leave room for such a differentiation is perpetually prone to simplification in assessing the impact of Afghanistan on the Alliance. Successfully nuancing such simplifications is, arguably, the most important empirical contribution of this thesis to the larger body of work written on NATO, Afghanistan and Transatlantic Relations.

As stated in the analysis, Rupp (2006:93) is a prime example of such a failure to recognize the multiple dimensions of NATO when he, in his analysis of NATO's first year following 9/11, argues that: *"Instead of unifying and responding effectively to the new dangers in the system, the member states of NATO experienced their greatest sustained internal conflict since the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949"*. However, as I have thoroughly proven in my analysis, the Prague Summit of spring 2002 was in fact a display of transatlantic cooperation and unity, through the allies seriously addressing the issues plaguing NATO, and implementing strong measures to correct them.

While the predominant claim in the literature (see e.g. Knutsen forthcoming; Rupp 2006; Noetzel & Schereer 2009) that Afghanistan has been a dividing experience for the Transatlantic Alliance for a large extent holds ground, it is a simplification and needs both moderation and specification. The statement only holds true in regard to the political dimension, and only from 2006 and on. From 2001 to 2005 in the aftermath of 9/11 the Alliance experienced a significantly stronger sense of transatlantic political unity than in both the preceding and the subsequent period. The main consequence of the US decision to proceed in Afghanistan with the American commanded OEF, and not NATO, is that a wedge was driven between NATO as an organization and the battlefield where its most important member was fighting its purpose-defining-war. This led to the realization in European capitals that NATO needed to change in order to stay relevant and thus produced political unity, not division as one might have expected. In these initial years after the start of the War on Terror, the new paradigm wielded a politically unifying effect that allowed the allies to commit to a substantial revision of the organizational and military dimensions of the Alliance, which were two areas of transatlantic division revealed by the War on Terror. Given the organizational and military transatlantic division of the time, much of the direct and immediate "sharp end" output of this political unity was channeled through OEF instead of NATO.

As the violence in Afghanistan increased from 2005 on, and ISAF developed into a COIN operation, European caveats and lack of transatlantic burden-sharing were the sources of increasing political division across the Atlantic. Much of the underlying

source of this negative development was the miss-match between initial European expectations of what ISAF was to be, and what the hard facts on the ground dictated that ISAF needed to become. In 2003 the NAC agreed on the plan for NATO to assume responsibility for Afghanistan on the false notion that it would resemble a peacekeeping force, while the Americans would do the fighting through OEF. To allow for this misconception is perhaps the greatest flaw of the dual-track strategy of OEF and ISAF, and the greatest underlying cause of the increasing political division as the conflict has progressed negatively. Realizing this, the US has attempted to unite the two forces, but this was in self-interest vetoed by France and Germany.

The analysis revealed that the initial political unity to a large extent has faded as the situation in Afghanistan has gotten progressively worse since 2006. It is, however, critical to note that this growing degree of political division, culminating in the extensive Americanization of the War in 2009, has *not* halted the organizational reformation and military transformation developments started at the Prague Summit in 2002. The transatlantic capabilities gap is a less dividing issue today than it was in 1999 (OAF) and 2001 (OEF). Europe has in this regard acted in order to “Keep the Americans in”, so to speak. With the aim of preserving a strong and relevant alliance, NATO has to a large degree transformed in accordance with US initiatives like the NRF and the PCC. Comparison of the commitment inherent in the DCI and the PCC, bares testimony to the fact that such a level of cohesion and unity was not present before September 11th 2001.

In short, the impact of Afghanistan, in the context of the War on Terror, has moved from initially creating a high degree of political unity and exposing organizational and military division, to increased military interoperability and comprehensive, albeit flawed, organizational adaptation to American initiatives, and thus a lessening of the division in regard to these two dimensions. While the political unity since 2006 has suffered greatly mainly due to inadequate burden-sharing in Afghanistan.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

Realist-based claims that the War on Terror initiated NATO's permanent demise and divided the Allies, largely fall victim to their monolithic and one-dimensional analytical concepts of the Alliance. Long-term transformational processes that were created by the political unity at the 2002 Prague Summit are overlooked at the expense of rhetorical vitriol across the Atlantic. The analysis has showed that the two periods following 9/11 (2001 – 2006) was marked by American led transformation and European compliance, often times with direct reference to the terror attacks on New York and Washington. A reaction to an external threat that – paradoxically – is right in line with the expectations of classic realist theory.

Knutsen (forthcoming) insists on the point of NATO by 2009 having developed into what he calls a “mulit-layred” alliance. He defines the concept as “...*an alliance à la carte, divided into several fractions of member states with divergent interests.*” Knutsen's main argument is that the ISAF operation has (among other factors) driven the alliance into being divided into a structure of three, and that the alliance cohesion that once could be taken for granted now must be built on a case-by-case basis. The members are divided into the distinct camps of *a)* those who which to strengthen Article 5 *b)* those who wish to prioritise out-of-area and *c)* those who are most concerned with bettering relations with Russia. I do not challenge that this is a quite accurate model of the present state of affairs in NATO. As the Albright Report (2010) and the debate surrounding the upcoming new Strategic Concept illustrates the good old “out-of-area contra Article 5” debate seems to never die. What I, however, do challenge is the notion that this “multi-layered” structure is a novel and devastating development in NATO history. In keeping with realist theory, the question rather should be to what extent the Cold War, and today the War on Terror, has managed to repress the ever present diverging “multi-layered” national interests of the allies, which when examined closer is far from always the case. During the 1956 Suez crisis the British Conservatives accused the US of “betrayal” and openly wondered if Alliance had come to an end (Healey 1959). Furthermore, in the eighties there were disputes over a number of issues, for instance: NATO's response to the Soviet

invasion of Afghanistan, the difference between Reagan's hard line and increased defence spending and the European line of arms control and détente, deployment of Pershing II missiles in Europe, and disputes over Soviet pipelines delivering gas to Europe (Theis 2009). In each instance NATO solidarity was mobilized and the alliance prevailed despite its differences.

NATO has always to varying degrees been a multi-layered alliance composed of sovereign member states that are "in it for themselves", so to speak. It is true, as Hallams (2010) among others have demonstrated, that this narrow rationality is heavily moderated by concepts of transatlantic and general alliance solidarity and shared values. None the less, both realism and liberal institutionalism presupposes that states are basically limited rational actors. Given that the geo-political situations, and several other factors, vary across the members, diverging interest patterns will always occur. The interesting question is whether the conflicts are subdued or played out, and why. In the case of Afghanistan it seems that transformation by Europe to meet American demands has been propelled by the War, and the allies have moved closer to each other in terms of the organizational and military dimensions. Much of this can be accredited to transformation programs such as the PCC and the NRF. However, the Afghan War, and ISAF in itself, has also been major drivers of European capabilities development and increased transatlantic interoperability. Ringsmose (2009:292-293) states that "*There is little doubt that the ISAF operation has served as an important catalyst reorganization and increased investment in expeditionary capabilities*" and he goes on to quote a senior British official in saying: "*It is now Afghanistan that is driving transformation, driving the change in the capabilities that nations need to develop, becoming the test-bed for the relevance of the command structure...*" (quoted in Ringsmose 2009:293).

The analysis shows that the War on Terror as an overarching paradigm of American, and thus by extension NATO, security policy, to a significant extent, did manage to subdue differing national interests among the allies in the period from 2001 to 2006. This is evident, among other factors, through the European willingness to subcome to American leadership in the OEF coalition of the willing (2001 -2003). The agreement

on the PCC at Prague in 2002 and the strengthening of the commitment at Istanbul in 2004, and lastly the Comprehensive Political Guidance on transformation at Riga in 2006. However, the Riga Summit was also marked by increasing political divisions over Afghanistan.

The disunity of burden-sharing on the ground in Afghanistan, and negative impact of European caveats limiting troop utilization became evident as ISAF progressed into southern Afghanistan in 2006. This speaks to members putting their own interest ahead of the common good, in effect almost acting as free-riders. This is an indicator of states behaving as presupposed in realist theory, when there is absence of an eternal force creating cohesion. The extensive national caveats placed upon most European troops lend credence to the realist perspective of lack of cohesion in such a context. This is in line with Brenner's (1993) predictions of states pursuing "*a more narrow conception of national interests*" when operating in an environment that lacks a unifying threat. The European states have an interest in keeping NATO relevant, and thus choose to contribute troops. By confining them to the north, however, many of the allies leave all the heavy lifting to others, in line with their national interests – regardless of the common good.

The dividing political effects of the Afghan War are heavily moderated by the unchanged fact that NATO represents a mutually beneficial institutionalization of the transatlantic relationship. Europe wields a significant influence over the US through the rule of consensus, and NATO secures the US a pacific and friendly ally in Europe, while facing emerging worries over a resurgent Russia and a rising China. All predictions of NATO's death in Afghanistan are thus unfounded and greatly exaggerated.

The fact that, the initial higher degree of political unity following 9/11 was not sustained when the allies faced greater risks, and were asked to make greater sacrifices, lends credence to the realist presumption of states amorally pursuing their narrow national interests. The continued organizational and military unity, in face of this increasing political division, is thus an expression of the common European and

American interest in a strong NATO. The liberal institutional claim, of shared values and a transatlantic bond as the glue holding the allies together, is significantly weakened by the European reluctance to act in accordance with the common good, through the extensive implementation of caveats. Hindering unified strategic planning and failing to shoulder its fair-share of the risk and burdens of the operation. The continued adaption of the organizational structure and military capabilities of the alliance, on the other hand, are in line with the self-sustaining and adaptable bureaucracy presumptions of liberal institutionalist theory. As a whole, in this case, realism has wielded the highest degree of explanatory power. Realism explains adequately both the unifying political reaction following 9/11, and the European investment in alliance transformation, as European Capitals realized this was needed to “keep the Americans in” and sustain a relevant Atlantic Alliance.

5.3 Final Remarks and Further Research

Once again, the fundamental inquiry that has motivated this entire thesis is:

To what extent has NATO's Afghan engagement, so far, served to be a source of greater transatlantic unity, or a source of division, within the Alliance?

The main lesson of the analysis is that it is highly beneficial to answer this question in a multifaceted manner, which allows for the inclusion of counter-working forces on separate dimensions within the Alliance. I now briefly outline the main developments for the entire period in question (2001 - 2010) in regard to each dimension.

For the political dimension the Afghan engagement, as a whole, has been a source of greater transatlantic division, despite the initial reaction of unity following 9/11. The main source of this division is disproportionate transatlantic burden-sharing in Afghanistan. This division is, however, significantly moderated by a number of mutually beneficial transatlantic interests in a vivid NATO. The claims of NATO's demise in Afghanistan are largely unfounded.

As for the organizational dimension the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 revealed a transatlantic miss-match, in terms of an absence of expeditionary command structures in NATO. The establishment of the ACO and ACT, as well as the NRF, has made considerable headway in mending this division. However, the Afghan engagement has to a large extent out-competed the NRF for resources, and has thus also been a source of organizational division, in the sense that it has hampered the development of the NRF.

In terms of the Military dimension, however, the NRF has been instrumental in the quite successful realization of the PCC. Furthermore, ISAF and the Afghan engagement has been a significant source of unity for the Alliance in regard to the issues of European capabilities development, and increased interoperability across the Atlantic.

The novel structuring of the analysis into the three separate dimensions has proved to be an analytically fruitful move. It has allowed the analysis to encapsulate dimensions of the transatlantic relations within NATO otherwise overlooked, and thus arguably contributed to a higher degree of inner validity for the thesis. Future research on NATO, and other comparable organizations, could likely benefit from applying a similar differentiated structure. Interesting future applications would, among others, be an investigation of the longer term effects of the conclusions herein drawn from a still ongoing engagement.

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